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MEMORIES OF THE TENNYSONS

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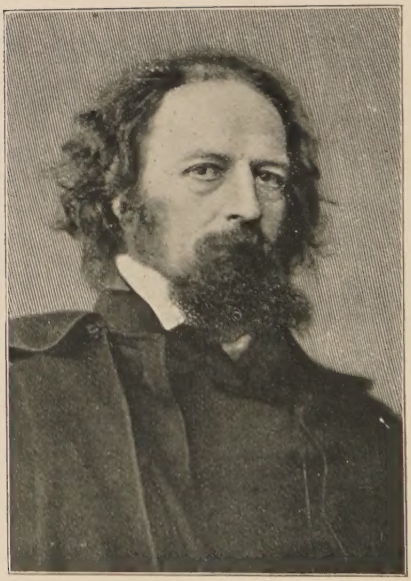

From Photo. by Mayall.

ALFRED LORD TENNYSON.

Memories of the Tennysons

By the Rev.
H. D. Rawnsley
Honorary Canon of Carlisle
Author of "Life and Nature at the English Lakes."

Glasgow
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Publishers to the University
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PREFATORY NOTE.

BORN at the "Vicarage by the quarry," from whence the late Poet Laureate had led his bride; and going, each year of one's life, away from the cedared lawn and the terraced garden, the flowery meadows, and the silver Thames below the chalk cliff, to the sand hills of the Lincoln coast, the levels of the Lincoln marsh, the windmills of the Lincoln wold, and the cornfields in the shining fen, which Tennyson, in his boyhood, had known—it was inevitable that one who had been brought up on so much of his poems as a child could understand, should associate the scene of those annual holidays with thoughts of the Poet.

Each year my father paid a visit to the Poet at Farringford, and one heard talk of Tennyson when he returned. Each time a volume of poems was given to the world, a presentation copy came to my father's hands, and we, as children, gathered in

the eventide to hear the poems read in our ears with such deep feeling, that we were impressed by them even when we could not realise their beauty of thought and diction.

It was not therefore to be wondered at that, in these short annual visits to Lincolnshire, one should look with awe upon the quaint old farmer who had, through my grandfather, given this or that story to the Poet Laureate for future immortality in his Lincolnshire dialect poem ; or that one should like to run about by the side of an old servant of the family who had known "the owd[1] Doctor Tennyson" and could tell quaint stories of the quarrels and the makings-up that took place at Halton-Holgate, and Somersby, after stormy political discussions at the dinner-table.

Another husbandman on the Rectory farm was the original of some of the quaint phrases in the Northern Farmer poems. He, too, was an object of great interest to me. But it was not till one came to live permanently at that old Lincolnshire house, within reach of Somersby, and went each summer eventide to fish in the Halton river, that one began to feel how the music made at Somersby was flowing right through our village, and that the brook

[1] Throughout this volume the word "old" in the Lincolnshire dialect is spelled "owd"—the spelling used in Tennyson's Poems. It is, however, pronounced as "ode."

spoken of in the "Ode to Memory" talked, all through one's fishing hours, of Alfred Tennyson.

It was a dreary river enough, nor wrongly was it dubbed by the peasants "Halton Dreän." As brown after rain almost as the river Jordan, it bore the "filtered tribute of the rough woodland" down to the Boston Deeps, in a most unromantic, surly sort of way, with a kind of monotony in its looks, relieved only when the mowers went afield in early June, and the haymakers gave it large gifts of grass and flowers from the scythe.

It was not without the interest of bird life. The kingfisher flashed by at the noons, and the twittering, wheeling company of sand-martins made summer always full of life and joyaunce. In winter time the jacksnipe came up from the fen, and the kittiwake gull from the Boston deeps hungrily hunted its waters. Now and again a heron stood knee-deep in the shallows with solemn patience at his fisher work, or passed seaward with a clanging cry.

For the rest, the only sound that generally broke the evening quietude of the Halton Dreän-side, was the blob of the watervole, as, at sight of the intruder, he took his header into the water from the grassy ledge, where he had been having his supper.

But always associated in my boyish mind with

the stream were the cowslips and cuckoo-pint in the meadows, the hawthorn bushes, white with fragrant snow, and the bleating of the lambs that was "poured about one's ears" in earlier spring. I remember the intense joy with which I leaned upon the bridges of the little river, as it came down from Partney, to watch the minnow shoals flash and flicker and fade, and flash again to sight, above the ribbed sand, nor can I forget with what delight one hailed those "cresséd islets white in flower" that swayed in the quiet back eddies, or the marigolds by the bank, and with what pleasure one filled one's hands with the scented mint, as one wandered by the stream.

But it was of Tennyson that the river and its surroundings were eloquent. There, at Ashby, was the moated grange, one of the many that went to the making of "Mariana's moated grange" in the poet's mind, and up by Partney was one of the many water-mills that allowed the poet vision of the mealy miller and the brimming waterdam, and gave him subject for his verse.

One had, as one went fishing, the sense that somehow or other that "rivulet there by the Hall" that came down through the meadows of Saucethorpe to become the Halton Dreän and Steeping River and so to pass out to the Wash at Wainfleet, belonged to Alfred Tennyson. Never was one

quite so happy as when one took one's pony to ride off to the sacred haunts of the poet's boyhood and entered the copse wood of Holywell, beneath the "windy wold" to search, among the carven runes upon the sandstone outcrop, for some initial letter that might tell of how the Tennyson lads had there, in the olden time, left their mark.

It was quite natural therefore that when one returned to the spot in manhood, one should ask questions of the elder folk among the villagers who remembered the poet and his brothers in the old Tennysonian days, and should put down such notes of Somersby and its neighbourhood as might serve to describe the cradle of the poet's song.

The peasants with whom I spoke have now all passed away. They were aged people, when I talked with them, nearly twenty years ago.

One of my objects in publishing these notes is to preserve the papers that my father, who was a student of Tennyson's work, had contributed years ago anonymously to *Macmillan's Magazine*. For permission to do this I have to thank Messrs. Macmillan. I have also to thank my brother for contributing his chapter of Tennyson memories. I am much indebted to Mrs. Clay for her father's sketches of Tennyson on board the Boulogne steamer, to Mr. G. G. Napier, who has permitted

me to reproduce several of the illustrations which appeared in his "Homes and Haunts of Tennyson," to Messrs. Macmillan for leave to use Lady Tennyson's portrait, to Mrs. Julius Tennyson for the portrait of the poet's mother, and to Mr. Nainby, Alford, for permission to reproduce two photographs.

H. D. R.

CROSTHWAITE,
October, 1900.

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Memories of the Tennysons.

CHAPTER I.

SOMERSBY AND ITS NEIGHBOURHOOD.

We are all the creatures of our surroundings—the poets perhaps more than most. Those who read Wordsworth's "Prelude," which was not published till after his death, will realize how the sights, sounds and features of the locality in which poets pass their boyhood, become part and parcel of them, colour their imagination right into the far-off years and become permanent possessions of their whole life. The sooner the poet begins to feel the wings of his fancy, the firmer hold does it seem that the associations of his surroundings will get of him, and we are not surprised to find that Lincolnshire, or that part of it in which Tennyson spent his early years, is found to be embedded in the late Laureate's poems, and that memories of "Linkishire daäys" ring up through them to the very last.

Anyone familiar with the Somersby neighbourhood, or who knows the wolds between Keal Hill and Louth, the "fen" between Spilsby and Burgh or Alford and Boston, the "marsh" between Burgh and the sea at Skegness, the coast line between Mablethorpe and Gibraltar Point, will constantly, as he reads his Tennyson, find himself back in Lincolnshire. Nor is this felt alone in such a poem as the "Ode to Memory," but in single lines throughout the "Idylls," and in whole passages in "In Memoriam."

We find this to be so not only in the work of the younger Tennyson, our late Laureate Lord of Song, but in the case of the poems written by the eldest Tennyson, Frederick, and in the sonnets with which Charles Tennyson Turner has enriched our literature.

It is perhaps the less to be wondered at that they should so constantly echo with sounds of Lincolnshire, when we remember how long a time the Tennyson lads lived there. The family did not leave Somersby till 1837. Dr. George Clayton Tennyson, the Laureate's father, had been presented to the living in 1808, during the minority of Mr. Burton, the next incumbent. His wife, Elizabeth Fytche, the daughter of the rector of Louth, had already blessed the Tennysonian hearth with four children—George, who died in infancy; Frederick, who outlived the Laureate; Charles, the sonnet writer; and fourth, Mary, afterwards Mrs. Kerr.

On the 5th of August, 1809—for I had it from Lord Tennyson himself that, though the 6th is popularly put down as the date of his birth, it really took place a few minutes before midnight of the 5th—was born Alfred. The old Manor House was more commodious for a family that gave promise of increase than the Rectory, and in this old red-tiled, unpretentious building, among its elms and poplars,—with its orchard and garden sloping south toward the meadows and the famous brook, were born, in later years, the brothers Edward and Horatio, Arthur and Septimus, and the sisters Cecilia, afterwards Mrs. Lushington, Emily, the beloved of Hallam, afterwards Mrs. Jesse, and Matilda, who still lives unmarried.

Frederick, Charles, Alfred, Edward, Horatio, Arthur, Septimus, Cecilia, Emily, and Matilda, a happy family of brothers and sisters far away in that quietest of wold villages, made the life of the place their own. The "quarry trenched along the hill and haunted by the wrangling daw"; the "meadowy curves" by which the brook brought down "the filtered tribute of the rough woodland" past their garden ground and the home field; the "sheep-walk up the windy wold," became to them the objects of their daily delight and wonder. The old mill wheel in the valley; the windmill on the hill opposite; the pool, once famed as a bathhouse for all diseases, beneath the sandstone cliff

with its strange hieroglyphics, in Holywell wood; the long avenue of elms; the strange steep road that went up northward over the bare, treeless hill toward Louth, had mystery for them: while the quaint stone cross in the churchyard close by; the belfry stair at Bag-Enderby; the relics of old-time splendour in the trees about the Manor House at Bag; the Elizabethan beauty of the terraced garden at Harrington Hall; the huge old moat, where the older Harrington Hall once stood; the little copse near with its quaint tussock grasses,—all these were sure to touch the imagination of the growing boys.

But it was not only that Lincolnshire, its sights and scenes, soaked into the minds of the Tennyson boys and girls, just at the time when these minds were most receptive and the dewy-dawn of memory freshest; the language of Lincolnshire also entered into their ears, and this, such pure dialect as the colony of Danes, who in olden time peopled the triangle between Boston, Horncastle, and Louth, had kept in purity quite till the middle of the present century.

More than fifty years had passed since Lord Tennyson left his father's homeland, but he never seemed to me to be so entirely his best self as when, brimming over with humour, he repeated, in the broad Lincolnshire dialect, some of the quaint conversations that he had in his bygone days with the typical northern farmer.

SOMERSBY.

His poet's ear was as "practised as a blind man's touch," and he remembered the least modifications and variety of tone, as he spoke or read the dialect of the old countryside. Anyone who knows the dialect to-day and listened to him could see where and what changes had taken place in it for the worse during the last two generations.

It was fortunate for the Tennysons that the churches near their home were not without monuments of the knightly days of old. In Spilsby Church the famous Willoughby Chapel told of a time of chivalry; in Harrington Church, within two miles of their father's door, lay one of the best preserved of the Crusader effigies in Lincolnshire. The monument of old Sir John de Halton, as he was called, lay cross-legged in the Halton Holegate Church, whither the boys would often go, for the old rector, Hardwicke Rawnsley, was one of Dr. Tennyson's fastest friends; but that monument, though the armour was well preserved, was much hacked in the face, while here, within two miles of Somersby, lay Sir John, the founder, mayhap, of the Harrington family, his head well hooded in chain mail, his powerful face unscarred and looking scorn, even in sleep, on paynim horde or godless Saracen. The years had blunted his spurs and broken his short sword blade, but otherwise Sir John lay scatheless. The poet of the Holy Grail would never be unmind-

ful of Sir John's strong face in the Harrington Church. Then there were in the same church Copledyke memorials, that spoke of a family first amongst the Danish settlers, for their name appears to mean, "An enclosed field with a dyke." Very appropriate inheritors they were of Sir John de Harrington's moated castle, and, I expect, very worthy ones too, if we may trust the account upon the tomb of the last of them,

"THOMAS COPLEDYKE, late of Harrington,
who deceased anno domini 1658, *ætat.* 72.

Of ancient stock here lies the last and best
Who hath attained to his eternal rest;
This monument bespeaks not him alone,
It saith the family are with him gone;
But Heaven receiveth saints, they're happy then
Which live as saints although they die as men."

There on the walls another Copledyke kneeled with his wife, their sons and daughters behind them. Memorial brasses lay on the ground, and the font itself was, after the fashion of the day, a record of ancient lineage and of a time when men's coats of arms were a reality; each facet of the octagon, save the one turned to the wall, was carven with the Copledyke arms and quarterings.

But it would not be to the Harrington Church so much as to the Somersby and Bag-Enderby Churches that the poet boys would turn for food for their imagination. At Somersby the gold lichens, bred of

SOMERSBY CHURCH.

the salt sea wind that came up the Steeping river valley, showed upon the mouldering tower and walls how many a generation must needs have taken time of day from the quaint old sun-dial, and have realized, as they passed to their rest, that the sun-dial's assertion, "Time passeth," was true. Nevertheless, but for the holy water stoup at the door and one other monument of eld, it would not have been guessed that the church, plain and uninteresting as it was, was coeval with the sister church, Bag-Enderby. Yet one can hardly doubt but that that single monument made itself a place in the mind of the sonnet writer, whom the late Bishop Wordsworth of Lincoln once described as "Inter Christianos poetas facile princeps." There, unspoiled by the hot hands of the Reformer, unmarred by the fingers of time, the churchyard cross shaft, 14 feet high, bore upon it, beneath its little hood of stone, on the one side an image of the Crucified and on the other an image of the Virgin Mary and her Holy Child. The Harrington churchyard could only show the socket of its cross shaft, Bag-Enderby could boast a broken shaft still upright in its socket; but the Somersby Church cross, within 100 yards of their father's door, was a thing of beauty and of solemn monition, perfect as when it left the sculptor's hand.

To Bag-Enderby, however, one can believe the lads would go with greatest pleasure. The very

gargoyles upon the Enderby Church tower would spout a poetry of the days of romance ; better devils in stone were never seen. The porch "squints" told of a sorrowful leper time, the seats in the porch of a day when the people came thither with tithe or for a market talk. The old iron shield-boss, picked up no one knows where, and nailed to the oaken nail-knotted door, and called by the inhabitants a knocker, what wars and rumours of wars would it not suggest? I know that I found myself looking for bits of Saxon hide round the nail fangs as I waited for the Sexton's key.

Inside the church was still the great man's pew. The pulpit, high uplifted above the Clerk's seat, made me involuntarily repeat: "An' eärd um a-bummin awaäy loike a buzzard clock ower my 'eäd." The windows, with their relics of stained glass, spoke volumes. The lover of the daisy and the singer of it saw in those windows, as a boy, many marguerites in honour of the churches' patron saint ; and every time the old bell tolled, it said and says, "Saintly Margaret, pray for us."

There was an heraldic record too of the connection of the church with Crowland Abbey in one of the windows. I talked once with a peasant who told me he had been the first to show the poet's mother this little record, but I think he was not well read in Crowland Abbey lore, for he said :

BAG-ENDERBY CHURCH.

"You know I said to th' owd doctor's wife, hev you seeän howr taäble-knives and forks i' the chuch winder, and be blaämt if she had, so I shewed her them. Naäy, I didn't knaw and noo-one does knaw how they caäme to be puttin' i' t' owd winder, but theer's the knives and forks sewerly."

Upon the chancel wall, beneath their pillared frieze and entablature, is a monument of one of the early squires of Enderby who knew the Manor House, hard by, in all its glory. Andrew Gedney kneels with his two sons reverently placed behind him, while Dorothie—her name is spelt differently in two places in the inscription—his wife, who died on the 7th of June, 1591, kneels opposite, with her two daughters in similar posture. One could hardly believe that the poet-boys, with their fondness for rhythm, would not, many a time and oft, during the sermon have jangled to themselves the couplet on that Gedney tomb

"Omne quod exoritur terra fit et moritur."

If poets are made by rhyming couplets on church monuments, the old couplet in Norman French upon the brass in the pavement that told of the Norman occupation of Lincolnshire might also have aided in that direction:

"Thomas Enderby et Agnes sa femme gy sont ycy
Dieux de lour almes de sa grace lyt mercy."

But the most notable brass in the little Bag-

Enderby Church, in their boy eyes, as in ours would doubtless be the brass deeply incised which asks our prayers for the Norman squire who, in honour of St. Margaret, builded it and gave the tower and bells:

> "Orate p ānā Albini de Enderby
> Qui fecit fieri istam ecclesiam
> Cum campanili qui obiit in vigilia
> Scti Matthiae Apc. A.D. MCCCCVII."

Old Albinus must have felt that "more things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of," and that the voices of the village hinds should have risen "like a fountain," week in week out, from the little church he founded close on five hundred years ago, may indeed have seemed to him a thing possible with heaven; but he never dreamed that part of the associations of youth which should mould a poet for a mighty nation would be from his hand in the gift of Bag-Enderby Church and church-going bell. I climbed the long "stee" or "lether," as the sexton called it, to see that bell. In the odorous dirt and draff of generations of birds, of lonely owls unnumbered that have there warmed their "wits," hung the bell that used to sound in Tennyson's ears, and silver-toned enough it is to-day. Round it, in old black lettering which has been moulded and soldered on after the bell had been cast, ran the inscription, "Sancta

Marguerita ora pro nobis," and, as a terminal to the inscription, was a very beautiful floriated cross in its inch-and-a-half square lozenge of weathered iron.

Down from the tower "stee" I came, observing that there were evidences of another bell having, at some prior time, kept company with the fine early bell we had seen, and mentally noting that of "four voices of four hamlets round" that rang a Christmas peal in the old Tennysonian days, Bag-Enderby was not one; this conjecture was confirmed, curiously enough, on that same afternoon. The Rector was waiting for me at the foot of the "lether"; he had most courteously pointed out the memorabilia of the church and had his hand on what is certainly one of the most remarkable early fonts in the neighbourhood. I spoke of the bells, and wondered what churches had peals of bells in their towers, which would ring the old year out and the new year in, to any listener at Somersby; he told me that there were many, and that he was often asked the question, but could not particularise. An American had written him, and, as Mr. Horatio Tennyson was in the neighbourhood, he appealed to him; he, in turn, wrote to his brother the Laureate, but, as was natural enough, the Laureate's reply was that he had forgotten.

I met a shepherd by the brook below Bag-

Enderby that day. "What peal of bells do you hear best here on a Christmas night, if the night is still?" His answer was, "Oh that's soon sattled, theer's nobbut four downreighters wi'in reeäch as ye maäy saäy, for Spilsby and Halton's ower far hoff —we can hear 'em at times when the wind's reight. The bells we moästlins consider to hear is Tetford, Hagg, Langton, and Ormsby. Ormsby's t'other side o' the hill, but theer's a deäl o' watter abowt, and fwoaks ses watter's good for bells, howiver Ormsby's are real good uns to hear, I'll warnt them."

But to return to the font. It had not the same interest for one, as that plain little font at Somersby, for therein the Laureate, evidently not expected to live had been hurriedly baptized on a certain Tuesday, August 8, 1809. The neatly written baptismal register attests the fact thus:

"*August* 8.

Alfred, son of George Clayton and Elizabeth Tennyson, baptized, born August 5th."

The neatness of the hand that inscribed that register was transmitted to his sons, as all who know Frederick Tennyson's and the Laureate's handwriting can vouch for.

But this Bag-Enderby font would quite certainly have often been curiously examined by poet eyes. There, in one facet of the octagon, was a Pieta—a virgin with the dead Christ on her lap; in another

the crown of thorns and instruments of the crucifixion; in another the symbol of the Holy Trinity; and in another, most quaintly carved and to a student of saga lore most interesting, was the white hart. The silver hind, evidently hunted and sore bested, as its up-gathered feet attest, is still so conscious whence its strength springs, that it turns back its head, and licks off with its long tongue the leaves of the holy tree, the Igdrasil, the tree of life. So did the sculptor of that old font hand down, in a form of christianized Viking myth, to the children of the Danes who peopled the outpost hamlet they called Enderby, the truth of a spirit-life which whosoever feeds thereon shall live forever.

I turned from the church with the age-enfeebled parish clerk who remembered quite clearly the father of the poets, "Th' owd doctor," as he familiarly termed him, and, promising to have a talk with him later, strolled to the ancient hall of the Gedneys or all that remains of it, hard by.

The ample lawn, or pasture-lawn and enclosure, with its baronial trees, its aged mulberry, its big walnut and its straggling out-buildings spoke of a time when, instead of the remnants of an Elizabethan farmhouse, there had stood here a noble manor house.

"Ay, sir, they do saäy that in owden time a

coach and four would come in at one end and go out the t'other, it's nobbut a bit of a thing to what it was i' them daäys." But bit of a thing as it is, the rooms of the farm are panelled, and, not to mention a certain King George Jubilee grate in the best bedroom, with a block of iridescent feldspar, supposed to be of fabulous value, in the mantelpiece above it, there is a fine old oak staircase of Jacobæan type which would do honour to nobler surroundings.

The Tennyson boys knew this old panelled house, and splendid views they would get as they peeped out from the oak stair-landing window over the valley in the direction of Haggworthingham and its whirling mills. But all that is romance in early domestic architecture would be theirs in other places than at Gedney's Manor House. Omitting mention of the wonderful dining-room that their father built in medley of ecclesiastic and domestic style at Somersby, close to their house stood a queer brick-built embattled hall, said to be, but without much reason, from the design of Sir J. Vanbrugh. There, too, was and is a fine old oaken stairway; "the wainscot mouse" might shriek, and I expect the wainscot rats squeaked, from behind a very substantial oaken panel in the so-called "Manor House" of Vanbrugh's handiwork; and if it be true that old Baumber, one of the originals

of the Northern Farmer, inhabited it years ago, we can be sure that the Tennysons knew its interior as well as its quaint exterior. Over the hill lay a fine old house, the ancestral seat of the Massingberds. Its avenue of trees, its dark lake, would be often visited by the boys; nearer home, stood the old seat of the Copledykes and later the seat of the Amcotts family,—the Harrington Hall of our day, with its picturesque church nestling close beside it, as if it were part and parcel of the domain. Its long dormer-windowed roof, its tall and beautifully proportioned entrance tower, flanked on the one side by its fourteen, on the other by its twelve windows, faced westward, and smiled a rosy welcome across the level meadows to all who came from the direction of Somersby. The very fact that the iron vane upon its entrance tower was pierced with the date 1681 gave the charm of an olden time to its hospitalities. The Amcotts of their day were warm friends of Dr. Tennyson. The Tennyson lads could never enter Harrington Hall, without sight of ancient panel carving, brought, it was averred, from the older hall or castle of the Harringtons, that stood due west across the meadow, by the side of the present road to Spilsby. Therein were figured fools in motley, clambering up trees, beasts of the chase, and marvellous creatures swallowing men, griffins and "dragons of the prime."

There too was beautifully carved the Copledyke coat of arms with its unpronounceable motto, and there too tapestries, which, if not beautiful, at least in boyish minds were capable of conjuring up dreams of a past, as powerfully as aged vane or quaint carved panels could have done.

But there was another feature of this Harrington Hall which may well have impressed the boys. The rooks from miles round came thither for rest. And by the hall in a square walled enclosure was the sweetest and primmest of old-fashioned Elizabethan gardens, while a high embanked terrace walk gave the ladies a fair prospect of garden beds and level pastures beyond.

If Charles Tennyson Turner may have remembered Harrington as he wrote his sonnet entitled "The Rookery," it is not straining the force of early association too far to imagine that Lord Tennyson had this garden and the quiet rookery beyond it in his mind as much as the gardens of Swainston when he wrote,

> "Birds in the high Hall-garden
> When twilight was falling,
> Maud, Maud, Maud, Maud,
> They were crying and calling."

This brings one to speak of the flowers that are, as readers of the Tennyson poets know, so constantly in mind. I know no English neighbour-

From Photo. by E. Nainby.

A SOMERSBY LANE.

hood where the old-fashioned herbaceous garden plots are so rich and rare in colour as the gardens of the great and little in that Somersby neighbourhood. In the spring, one must turn to the western coasts to find the glory of rhododendron and azalea; but let the fortunate traveller find his way, on a September morning, into the old Somersby Rectory garden or into the garden of Harrington Vicarage or Harrington Hall, or peep into any of the Enderby cottage plots, and he will know what was in Tennyson's mind as he wrote his "Ode to Memory," and will feel he has not only looked upon hollyhocks and tiger-lilies without equal for beauty of stature and richness of bloom, but has seen such sunflowers "ray round with flame their disks of seed," and breathed the balm of such rose-carnations as he shall never be able quite to forget.

The old times have pleasantly returned to us, and brought back just the same old herbaceous plants as rejoiced the poet lads in their Somersby days, and we can better know now than we could twenty years ago what kind of flower gardens were in vogue in Lincolnshire at the beginning of the century.

It is true that of wild flowers there was not, generally speaking, in the fields and hedges and lanes, the luxuriance that one finds in westerly and

southern counties. But the Tennyson boys would go annually to Tunby Woods to gather the lilies of the valley, and as for snowdrops, they literally whitened the little "Halliwell" copse close to their home. There, too, in spring, came abundantly the soft-scented primrose, and for violets Langton Hill was famous. How accurate and exact was the memory, for his old home, of him who wrote:

> "Our father's dust is left alone
> And silent under other snows,
> There in due time the woodbine blows,
> The violet comes, but we are gone."

As I walked about the Somersby lanes I noticed an absence of the briony but a constant presence of the woodbine, which specially seemed to love the sandstone outcrops that there abound. Talking with an old man at Somersby, I said, "Have you many violets hereabout?"

"Yees," he replied, "theer's a sight o' white ones, specially theer upo' th' owd churchyard bank."

The Tennysonian line familiar with those who care for poetic description of an English flowering shrub, "Laburnums, dropping-wells of fire," may be taken as another instance of this accurate memory of the poet's old haunts. It chances that from Bag-Enderby Manor House to the Spilsby Road near Harrington, the main foot-path runs along by a hedge in which grow a number of very large and

ed laburnum trees. They must have been planted some beneficent Lord of the Enderby Manor, and the flowering time of the year must have been, hen the Tennysons were lads, an almost unique ature in local scenery.

As for other flowers, cowslips and the "faint veet cuckoo-flowers" were just scarce enough to ake children care to gather them. The pastures neath Somersby Rectory were not mown for hay t generally kept cropped by sheep, and many a dy's dress (for the fashion of crinoline was not t) might have been noticed by the boys, in those mersby meadows, either side the beck, turning the English daisies and showing their roseate dersides, as they swept the close-cropped grass. o be sure, Maud's feet may have "touched the eadows and left the daisies rosy" elsewhere, but ne of the sights in spring was the daisy-pied ope close beneath the Rectory garden. I do not ink the Tennysons plucked "long purples" by e Somersby brook; but willow-herb grew abund-tly—willow-herb with that sweet balmy odour its leaf and its quaint bushy head at seeding ne. Marigolds were found, but not abundantly. he purple orchis was not common, but cress still aves in the shallows, and the peppermint, with s strong scent, abounds. In autumn, the golden d, frequent at Somersby as in sandy places they

ever are, was glorious, and whilst the delicate litt
scarlet pimpernel and viola were bright in th
stubbles, the lanes were made glad for the boy
by the tender harebell. For oat-grass and fo
sword-grass and for bulrush by the pool, the poet lad
would go to the 'marsh' which they crossed on the
way to Mablethorpe from Louth, or as they wer
by Burgh le Marsh to Skegness, which in their da
was a very select kind of family watering-plac
on the coast, a dozen miles to the south. I
those long embanked ditches, or "dreans," as they ar
locally called, through that "waste enormous marsh
whose "trenched waters run from sky to sky
there grew a glory of water ranunculus that seeme
to fill the ditches with driven snow; while th
feathery bog-bean and the arrow-head (sagittaria
and the flowering rush (butomus) in their season
would often tempt the Tennyson boys to leav
their carriage and fill their hands with "silver
marish-flowers." At home, in their beloved broo
which the forget-me-nots gladden well-nigh all th
months of the year, "the cressy islets" were "whit
in flower," even as the marsh ditches were whit
and not infrequently was found the tall flag flowe
that children look upon as specially the pride o
the water-brook. As for trees, with the accurat
portrayal of which, in all their shapes and change
the poems of the Tennysons are full, it was fo

inate that, owing to that variety of the soils from ne chalk right through to the Kimmeridge ay, many varieties abounded. The linden tree erhaps was scarce, but then either at the Halton olgate Rectory or at the Hall at Ormsby were ne avenues with "buzzings of the honied hours" for eir poet ears. Scotch firs again are not plentiful the district, but some old Lord of the Manor, robably one of the fore-elders of the present lord, d planted a fine clump between Somersby and ag, which are the feature of the landscape as one asses down the valley bottom; and along the ain road to Tetford, for a quarter mile or more, rew the red, wind-twisted stems of the Scotch rs, that asserted themselves by their fine scent on hot August day and by their dark presence of erpetual green in winter.

The beech loves the chalk, and up on Harrington Hill or at Langton or at Dalby they grew xuriantly, while in the Rectory garden flourished young copper beech that grows in beauty still. he wych-elm, splendid specimens of which stand at ne cross roads at Bag-Enderby and at Somersby—oth of the latter planted within the memory of the dest inhabitant—abounded. For a couple of miles more they, with oaks and ash trees, made of ne main road to Harrington and on towards pilsby a glorious avenue. What a happy thing

it was that no ill-advised enclosure or illegal encroachment on the roadside wastes of the neighbourhood had ever come into the minds of landowners in the Somersby neighbourhood! The great roadside stretches of green, embowered by wych elm, oak and ash, would stir anyone, with a spark of poetry in him, as he saw the light and shadow flash upon the riders as they came and went up the long avenues towards the poet's home.

The heart of Dane-land took root here, and the first inhabitant from over the sea, felt God was with him, and for him the ash tree symbolised the holy tree of life, the Igdrasil; so it probably came to pass that rude forefathers planted their ash trees round their homes for charm and for reverence, and the ash has certainly proved itself a tree of life at Somersby. There are not in Lincolnshire finer or more feathery-leaved ash trees to be found, and many a time must the Tennyson boys have wondered at the tardy ash buds "black . . . in the front of March," and noted with what delay they shook their feathers free, with what a swiftness, in the first November frost, they passed back to naked leaflessness.

Now to the hollow behind in the little wood we turn, and find that most of the tall spindle-grown trees in the copse can hardly date back to Tennyson's days. One notes, however, that the sycamore is

there, and though not a weed, as in Wordsworth's country, doubtless it hung out its keys plentifully enough in the olden time; one notes, too, that of the oldest, the larch, not common thereabout, is found, and one of the queerest twisted larch trees imaginable grows between Halliwell Wood and Somersby cross-roads; and, doubtless, at the time of the blue-tit and of the rare song of "the mounted thrush," on this quaint larch tree, often visited, the rosy plumelets would be seen. Close by the northern side of Somersby Church a walnut tree scents the air. Walnut trees with the Spanish chestnut and "massed" chestnut boughs, are found on various parts of the manor; one is not astonished to find the walnut seldom alluded to by the poet brothers, for they are not common in the Lincolnshire neighbourhood, and seem to have been planted as mulberries were planted, mostly for home use, in garden ground by the owners of manors and rectories.

Down at the bottom of the Somersby Rectory garden grew and grows a nut grove; in one or two of the cottage gardens a yew tree may be seen, but it would appear that the Irish yew predominates. Still, there were yew trees sufficient to let the Tennyson boys note how the wind could "puff the swaying branches into smoke" within a reasonable walk from their father's door. But, as

a matter of fact, Tennyson told my brother that he did not notice this till late in life. Their father's door—how at once the lines ring up:

> "The seven elms, the poplars four
> That stand beside my father's door."

The seven elms still stand, or if not they, at least the reproductions of the trees the poet knew. "The poplars four" have vanished, even as has vanished, and that by fire, the little house, traditionally the old Rectory house, adjoining the Rectory grounds on the west, which these poplars screened from sight. But the black poplar was a tree that constantly would be part of any poet's memory of Lincolnshire. The poplars girdle the fen farms, and sing round the marsh homesteads. The tassels of these trees in the spring, their quick change of colour as they leaf, the sound of "the going" in their tops, would have impressed any child. The Tennyson brothers slept in a little room near to the roof, at the west end of the house; their window looked full into the poplar branches, and if, as is averred, in that room, that "darling room, their hearts' delight," their earliest songs had birth, it is not wonderful to find that the black poplar found its bards in the Tennyson family.

It would not be giving a full account of the trees of the neighbourhood were we to omit mention of some others which are features of Somersby landscape. Down by the Somersby brook were alders

bitter in leaf and dark and heavy of fruit, and willows swayed and sighed, unpollarded and beautiful. One willow by the old mill, just below the house whose record only survives now in the name of the close, the Mill Close, grew, in Tennyson's days, to great beauty; it has fallen, and struggles to reassert itself by sending up branches from mid-stream. Another, the finest willow betwixt Somersby and the sea, waved in silver light just beyond the bridge that spans the pool beneath the Stockwith Mill. He who, standing by the old mill (old, for the present Stockwith Mill is probably the second since his day), must, as a boy, have

> "Loved the brimming wave that swam
> Thro' quiet meadows round the mill,
> The sleepy pool above the dam,
> The pool beneath it never still."

loved also, we may be sure, to stand upon the roadway bridge hard by and gaze into that grey old willow tree. It fell in a storm twelve years since, but even in ruin it was magnificent. Readers of Tennyson will have observed how the thorn tree is not infrequently alluded to, and assuredly, whether for blossom and scent in spring or coral berries in autumn, I know none finer than the grand gnarled and twisted old fellows that stand about the pasture lands each side the Somersby brook. The maple that "burns itself away" at the first touch of a

November frost, the wild cherry that blushes into rose in mid October—these were hardly known, and comparatively rare was the mountain ash, with its coralline fruitage; but blackberries draped the hedges, and dog-roses made the Somersby lanes sweet; while on the "ridged wold," "Burton gorse" and "Harrington gorse" gave the lads ample opportunity of knowing how the dews "drench the furze" when each gorse bush shone with its Catherine-wheels of delicate spider-web on an autumn morn, and when the thousand gossamers that rose as the sun lessened the weight of their dewy pearls, would "twinkle into green and gold." One other noticeable feature in Somersby lanes was that "vine of the villager," the elder tree. The scent of its cream-white umbels, its "undulating censers prodigal," made the June evenings breathe of balm; but in October, when the people in olden time brewed what they called their "port wine" from its berries, its rich dark fruitage and leafage, reddening to the fall, gave quite an autumnal splendour to the hedgerows. But no account of flower life in the Somersby lanes would be complete if we omitted mention of the luxuriant growth of the wild honeysuckle. Readers of Tennyson will remember how favourite a flower with him is the sweet wood-bine.

CHAPTER II.

FOLK-LORE AT SOMERSBY. REMINISCENCES AMONG THE VILLAGERS.

THERE were men and women as well as flowers and trees that helped to make Alfred Tennyson what he was. It was a very remarkable peasantry amongst whom he grew to manhood. I say manhood, for the Laureate, the youngest of the three poet brothers, was twenty-eight years old when the sad inevitable exile came, and when the Tennysons went forth from the manor house which had served for rectory, leaving their father's dust

> "alone
> And silent under other snows."

The Danes who dwelt at Somersby in the poet's time were much as their forefathers for the last three centuries had been—the same in look, in temper, in quaintness of character. The past sixty years have not changed them, though H.M. Inspector of Schools is spoiling their dialect. It is true that thatch has made way for red pantiles on some of their cottage

rooftrees. The Somersby Church roof set a bad example in this matter of change; but still the dormer windows of these Danes' houses preserve a look of times past, and the walls are much as the Tennysons knew them, good comfortable stone and daub, or mud and stud, with a warm yellow colour-wash upon them that makes fair background for creepers and clambering roses.

I was anxious to learn something of the local superstitions in matter of boggles and witches and wise men, whose memories linger still at Somersby, for it was possible that the weird side of the work of the Laureate might have its beginning in such native romance as was common amongst the people with whom as a boy he came into contact.

Half-way betwixt Harrington and Somersby lies Fairy Wood; this looks as if "the little folk" were once believed in hereabout; perhaps one might find more certainty of it in talks with the local elders. Old A. A. was at home, a fine burly old fellow with dark brown eyes, and a smile that "seem'd half within and half without, and full of dealings with the world."

"Yees, yees, I'm moästlins at hoäm; legs is wore out, you knaw; and like eneu, I've hed my time, four scoor yeärs or moäre."

"Then you remember Dr. Tennyson?"

"Th' owd doctor? Yees; why, I seäd him hivvery

Sundaäy pass by for sarvice to Henderby Church, and as for his missis and the young laädies, they'd coom in here, when I'd gotten wed, and taäke oop the babby saäme as if it was their own."

"Eh, that they wood an' all," chimed in the wizened little old woman in the chimney corner. "Theer was no pride nor nowt about the young laädies, and as for her, she was the kindest of bodies to poor folk ivver i' my daäy hereabouts."

"You know I was born saäme year as Halfred," said the old fellow. "I suppose he's a great man now, a lord, and what not, and does a deal o' work for the Queen, I suppose. Well, it was not no moor than I put down for them, for all the boys had noätions. As for th' owd doctor, he was the clivverest man in these parts."

"Do you remember him?"

"Yees, I do, sewerly; a great tall man he was; why, his foot was thirteen inches; fond of tobaccer he was; and as for his sermons i' church, they was ower good and ower short."

I chuckled, for the shortness of sermons is not nowadays often considered a fault, and it was a little difficult to see how a sermon could be "ower good."

"Quite a furrin-looking gentleman, you know—brown i' the eye, and brown i' the head, and brown i' the skin; but, lor, they was all on 'em furriners."

One can easily see how the tall brow and Spanish-

looking eyes and Southern complexion of the Tennysons—excepting Frederick of the fair hair and blue-grey eyes—who boasted the blood of the Plantagenets, would strike the blonde-faced son of the Vikings in the Lincolnshire Daneland. The miracle is that, knowing, as my old friend put it, that "He talked and wrote Hebrew," the Enderby peasants did not aver that the Tennysons had come from Palestine in the train of old Sir John de Harrington.

"He nivver only plaäyed me one trick, did th' owd doctor; he sent his man for eighteen-pence for 'fire munney,' and, why, I'd nowt but a parshel of owd bricks for my elding, but nowt wud doä but I mud paäy, so I settled wi' him, but—," and here the old fellow shook his head, as much as to say it was more than "th' owd doctor's plaäce" had been worth, "he nivver coomed agean."

I explained that it was some old manorial usage probably, and that one payment was sufficient; he had not thought of so simple an explanation before, and it pleased him.

"Ay, ay, like enuff, like enuff, for I've allus said th' owd doctor mud be high larnt, but he wud nivver hurt a hair of any man's head."

"And Mrs. Tennyson, do you remember her?"

"Yees, to be sewer I doä. She was a lowish woman was his wife."

I was not troubled; familiarity with the Lincoln dialect assured me that all he meant was that the mother of the poets was not tall of stature.

"And she had dark eyes and dark hair, and was a deäl on the rwoäds i' a cheer. Eh, but the boys was fond on her, and the gells an' all. Poor things, they would hev books allus i' theer hands as they went along."

"And the boys?" said I.

"The boys was all for study; why blaämed if they didn't mek a book and git eight pund for it, the four on 'em together, when they was nobbut lads. They was bound, you knoä, to git on. They was all for books, I tell you, and so was th' owd doctor, and he larned them all hissen."

"But I suppose they were fond of hunting and fishing?" I said.

"Naäy, naäy, I doan't think they followed hunting; times I've gone nestin' wi' them down i' Halliwell and New England, but they was a deäl fonder o' fishin' then owt else nobbut study. Eh, I can see them now down i' yon midder by the beck."

Ah, thought I, how well it was for English literature's sake that the Tennyson boys had so diligently followed, through morning dew and evening mist, the twistings and curves of that simple brook

> "that loves
> To purl o'er matted cress and ribbéd sand,
> Or dimple in the dark of rushy coves."

"But you know th' owd doctor was all for study, and maäde the boys stay in a deäl, mornins and night."

"I have heard he was a great builder," I said, "as well as a very learned man."

"Ay, ay, why to be sewer, but you know it wasn't he that builded yon great owd room at end o' the house. It was Horlins, a real clivver little chap, as was his man, coomed with him to Somersby, another countryman—I doan't rightly knoä his native, but howivver he was all for bricks and mortar and erses and gardens."

The doctor's man, Horlins, must have been a character. It was this Horlins whose complete mastery of his master, and general tyranny of the household comes out in the Life of the Laureate by his son, who chronicles for us that one day having been blamed for not keeping the harness clean, he rushed into the drawing-room, flung the whole harness on the floor, and roared out, "clean it yoursel', then!"

"But," I said, "surely Dr. Tennyson planned the room and carved the chimney-piece?"

"Oh yees, yees, th' owd doctor was harchitect; he was head man, you know, and a reall good un he was an aw, but it was Horlins as was always at him, nivver could let bricks and mortar aloän, and here a bit and theer a bit, and led all the stoän and did the buildin', or best part of it."

From Photo. by E. Nainby.

THE SOMERSBY BROOK.

"But did not the doctor do the carving with his own hands?"

"Yees he did, and he carved them Hadams and Heves an' all as is set up outside above the windows out o' the sandstone from the quarry, and did a 'maäzin' sight o' work at the chimley-piece, and th' owd door an' all. Oh, he was real clivver owd chap as a harchitect, mind you, was th' owd doctor."

The old fellow little knew how that love of architecture had been inherited by one at any rate of the doctor's sons. He had not read the poems of him who speaks of "finest Gothic, lighter than a fire," and had not heard how the Laureate had loved to indulge, among the Surrey hills, the taste for building, of which his father had left a monument at the little Rectory house, beneath the wold of Lincolnshire.

I had, in my interest in the Tennyson family, forgotten for a moment the ghosts and wizard lore, but I returned to the subject.

As for 'ghoasts,' old A. "knew nowt about them things"; Jenny-wisps he had seen and heard tell of.

But witches?

Well, he couldn't speak much about them, they was all gone now; but theer was one, the Scamblesby witch as lived at Scamblesby mountain-side, and he had heard of one in his father's days, at

Tetford. He could tell of "three coach waggins going past the Scamblesby witch's door, and she had crossed the road wi' her stick, and the two first horses went clean over i' the road, and the third waggin went straight on reightlins, and th' owd witch shakked her fist at the man as druv the team; 'The divvil git tha,' she said, and she skriked out, 'Theer goes the man wi' the wicken gad,' for you know he had a bit of a wicken tree in his whip stock, and theer's nowt like a bit of wicken agean the witches; when I was a boy we allus put a bit o' wicken i' the churn to mek the butter coom. Theer's two wicken," he continued, "growin i' the Rectory gardin cloase by the chuch."

I soon found out that wicken was the rowan or mountain ash, and was glad to have heard of this powerful natural antidote against wizards and witches.

"But now, A., tell me what about the evil eye? You have heard of the evil eye?"

"Oh well, the evil eye was quite common i' them daays," meaning in the days when he and the Tennysons were young. "Fwoaks' cows and pigs was hover-looked, and the wust was, one nivver could tell who had done it, and babbies was hover-looked and went wrong, and fwoaks' bairns was hover looked and the poor things withered away."

"But what did people do who had been over-looked, or whose pigs had been over-looked?" I said.

"Doa; why, they went to the wise men, to be sewer. Theer was one they called Stainton, at Louth, and if fwoaks had lost owt, or gotten owt stolen, they would goa hoff and he'd soon tell 'em who'd done it, but ercourse they had to paay. I've heard tell that a horse's shoe hinged up hover the door is a good thing ageanst the hevil eye. Theer is a queer un, a solidly great un we dug up cloase by, a solid plaäte of metal, not a herse's nor hass's as I can mek out, but belonging some queer thing, you know, from past times, and we nailed it oop over the blacksmith's door, but for the hevil eye, mind tha', theer's nowt better than a horse's shoe."

I rose to go, but not before the old fellow had told me that he remembered speaking, as a boy, with the four men who had brought and planted the great tree near by, a huge wych-elm whose long low branches, spreading out from it, was the delight of all Enderby children who wanted a swing, till of late, when it has had to be propped for security's sake; and that he had lived in the little mud and stud cottage for "hoaver sixty years, and minded the Tennysons well."

The next day I called on old J. C., the bell-

ringer and "sexon," as he is termed, of the two churches, Somersby and Bag-Enderby. He was a little weather-beaten man, crooked now, and bowed with rheumatics, with fine grey eyes, and a refined but much worn and very sad face.

"Yees," said he, "I can hardlins hockle. I'm i' my eighty-first, and a bit o' 'bacca's the sole bit of plessur left to me."

He was soon filling his pipe with "something a little better than hornary," as he phrased it, and after insisting that we should look at his elephant 'bacca pot that he was going to will to the Squire's lady, and making the eyes of a toy monkey blink from the chimney piece, by "geeing it a down-reight good shak," he was soon off back far away in memory of boyish days, and it was plain to be seen that the Tennyson family was the centre of much of those olden time recollections.

"You see, we wur boys togither, and boys remembers boys, specially them, for there was no pride nor nowt about 'em, and for all they wur th' owd doctor's sons, and he was high larnt, they was quite conversible wi' poor fwoak, you know, quite plaäin i' theer dress an' aw, both boys and gells—no crinolins nor fanciculs nor nowt, and and as for th' owd doctor, he was quite a slumpt un. Eh dear! he was fond of his 'bacca. Theer was a little shop theer, just hoaver the road, see

tha', and he would many a time call and git a bit of 'bacca theer. It helped him in his studies, you know."

"And what was he like?"

"Oh, he was a fine tall gentleman, and so was the boys, all tall and dark, quite furriners, you know."

"And Mrs. Tennyson?"

"Well she was a lowish little laädy, she was, wi' a pleasantish faäce, as far as I can mind. She enjoyed bad health, poor thing, and was offen i' a chair, and hed a great dog wi' hooves, like a donkey a-moast, as would draw her cheer at times. Eh dear! I've seen that critter laäy hissen i' the middle of the road, you know, on a hot daäy, and nowt would stir it till it hed a mind. But the boys and gells were amoast allus wi' her, particular fond of their ma, I suppose. I was nobbut a boy i' them daäys, but I know she was a kind laädy to all the poor as wanted for owt."

"And you have heard old Doctor Tennyson preach?"

"Why, yees, to be sewer I hev', scoors o' times. He only hed one fault, he 'slipped' at times."

I suppose he alluded to the shortness of sermons old A. had spoken of. "But what kind of voice had he?"

The old man put down his pipe, and said very

deliberately, "He had a voice like a horgan, yees, like a horgan, he 'ad."

Thought I, ah now I know where those deep sonorous powers of speech come from, which all the sons, but notably Charles T. Turner and the Laureate and Arthur seem to have inherited. Who that ever heard either of these brothers read a poem but has felt that they have indeed listened to speech almost of a new quality of musical tone and power. It was worth coming far to hear this bit of circumstantial evidence.

"And what were the boys like? Did you ever think they would make a great name for themselves?" I said.

"Yees, they wur bound to, they were all for study. He was the clivverest man i' the county, a great scholard, and he taught them hissen, wouldn't let other folks do it, taught them hissen, he did. They was bound to get oop—and I heard it said as they'd putten things—potry and what not—down i' a book before they'd gotten oop to be men. But you know they wur bound to rise, they'd allus books i' theer hands, meet them where you would. And the young laädies and all, Miss Mary and Miss Hemly, and one I can't remember, and Miss Matilda,—they wur a deal indoors along o' theer lessons, I mind, but they were very parshel to Halliwell. Halliwell

wasn't growed up then; there was a bath-house with steps down to the watter, and fwoaks in carriages came from far and near to drink it. Wonderful watter! it was nobbut a bit sen, that our owd nebbur was liggin' a-dying and he axed for a cup o' watter from the Holy Well, and they sent and fetched it, and he took it and went off upon his feet. Why, i' my time theer was a school-house down in Halliwell Wood, and a skittle halley close by the well, but all them things is changed now, excep the snowdrops, and they coomes oop reg'lar, a sight on 'em i' Halliwell. I was awaäy at time of th' owd doctor's death, but it was something very catching, I suppose, as took him off. I know they'd oppened the winders and carried him out o' the house, and Mr. Rownsley, fra Halton, th' owd Mr. Rownsley that was,—they wur friends, you know,—druv hover, and nothing wud do but he wud hev him taaën back into the house and winders shutten. Black typhus or fever or something it was. And, eh dear! I wish they hedn't put raäils round him, for scoors and scoors comes nowadays from far enough, and wants to see his naäme, and though I heve cleaned moss off it once, the nasty owd stuff bides a deal o' rembling, and grows and mucks it all oop, and you can hardlins read his naäme, let aloan his date."

I knew the altar tomb or table slab of moss-

covered stone that lies within its much weathered girdle of iron rails, just at the south-west end of Somersby Church, and I remembered with what difficulty I had made out that it had been placed there

"To the memory of
THE REVEREND GEORGE CLAYTON TENNYSON, LL.D.,
Eldest son of George Tennyson, Esq., of Bayons Manor, and
Rector of this parish of Bag-Enderby and Benniworth,
and Vicar of Great Grimsby in this county.
He departed this life on the 16th of March, 1831,
aged 52 years."

I too could have wished the rails away, but I felt it was but the natural wish of the family, exiled of necessity from the land of their birth, that the honoured grave should be quite surely protected from desecration, which had dictated the iron railings.

"He was in his prime when he died," I said.

"Yees, yees, but though he nivver looked owd he nivver looked young. There was a great family of them to wear him, one died a babby, but theer was eleven left," and the old man went over the names of them, and added, "but you know Mr. Halfred was first man of the lot. It was study as wore out th' owd doctor. He nivver would 'low other fwoaks to school his bairns. He did it hissen, naäy, I'se a-stoorien' now, for my brother, him as is surveyor down at Tetford, older

by two year than I am mysen, schooled them in 'rithmetic at first, as he's often telt me."

"I suppose he had a good deal upon his shoulders; he was rector of three parishes and vicar of one," I said.

"Yees, but that would'nt a hurtnt anybody i' them daäys: things is sadly altered now, you know. When th' owd doctor died, his misses kep on the living, for Mr. Burton was ower young. She had two curates, I mind, one on 'em got along of the farmers, and they played sad wuk wi' him, and we had to get shut on 'im. Theer was a Wesleyan minister Mr. Halfred used to have a deal o' talk with i' them days, and he said he would go to church to accommodate his mother, but he could well have liked to get up a meeting hissen, for the chuch parsons were such hypocrites."

I confess that I felt, after hearing of such parsonic scandal as hinted at by the old fellow, during the interregnum, that I sympathised with the manly young undergraduate who felt the hollowness of "sitting under" a curate who had not risen to a sense of his parochial responsibilities, but I could not help a kind of sad smile when the old parish sexton added,

"He was quite a religious young man was Mr. Halfred, you know, leastways would have been if he had been dragged up by the Wesleyans, you know."

Perhaps my old friend saw it, for he added a little fiercely, "When did you ivver hear a man cry out for mercy in a chuch?"

I knew well what he meant. Comprehensive as the Liturgy is, it is stately and decorous and very orderly, and if a man, at some white heat of penitential emotion, did cry out for mercy in a church, I suppose a churchwarden would be sent for, so I said nothing.

My old informant's knowledge of Tennyson's leaning to the sincere and primitive Christianity of the Methodists receives a curious corroboration from a passage in the Memoir, which gives us at Chapter VII. some extracts from the correspondence that passed between Tennyson and his beloved one, Emily Sellwood, in their days of early attachment. The poet, writing from Mablethorpe, says:

"I am housed at Mr. Millman's, an old friend of mine in these parts. He and his wife are two perfectly honest Methodists. When I came and asked her after news, she replied, 'Why, Mr. Tennyson, there's only one piece of news that I know, that Christ died for *all* men,' and I said to her that is old news, and good news, and new news. Wherewith the good woman seemed satisfied. I was busy yesterday reading anecdotes of Methodist ministers, and liking to read them too, and of the teaching of Christ, that purest light of God."

"And do the family ever come down here?"

"Yees, odd uns does, but not Mr. Halfred, I have not seen him more than twice hereabouts, and I lived at the Rectory for forty years mysen. Things isn't much changed theer, why you know 'them poplars four that stand beside my father's gaäte' is gone, but the elms is standing or the best part on 'em."

I pretended ignorance about these poplars four.

"Well," said my friend, "I only coomed to know of them mysen by chance. I was cleänin' windows, or something, and looked in a picter book. I was trespassin' a bit, mind ye, and theer I found about 'them poplars four.' Two of 'em wur down before I took sarvice, and one on 'em died, and one on 'em I helped to tek down, because it was hunsaäfe. They stood theer at the far end of the house from here, inside the far gaäte, you know."

I did know, for the place had been more than once pointed out, but I learned now, approximately, the date of the fall of the first two poplars. The old man had left the Somersby Rectory after forty years' service. So the poplars, which were probably old and well-grown trees, ripe for a sudden fall in a storm after the fashion of poplars, must have perished within the decade following the departure of the Tennysons, who left Somersby in 1837.

The old clerk spoke glowingly of the memories

of kindness and unselfishness of the Tennysons of old time, and he said,

"You know th' owd doctor, for all he was thought a deal of by quality, heddn't an ounce of pride in him—naäy nor any of the family either. Would stop and talk wi' anyone upon the roäd."

Mighty good thing too, thought I; how could the Laureate ever have entered into the simplicities of life and known anything of the sorrows of the poor or torn the disguise from the face of the curled and oiled Assyrian-bull type of insolent mammonism, or known how really the tenants looked up to a squire of the "Sir Vivian" type, "a great, broad-shouldered genial Englishman," or how would it have been possible for him to have learnt the real worldliness and quaint humours of the Northern Farmer, had he not been free as air in his early youth in his conversation with the poor about his father's gate, and had communion with the life of the Somersby and Bag-Enderby villagers. To this want of pride which both the old people who remembered the Tennyson boys speak of, we owe it to-day, that a dialect fast disappearing, the racy ways of thought, and the unique peculiarities of the Lincolnshire Daneland, in a class of men too little studied, are handed down to posterity.

The old clerk bore out the fact of the love the Tennyson lads had for the brook. He did not

remember whether they were fishers or not, but he knew that he often, as a boy, had seen them down by that sinuous stream, the pastoral rivulet that swerves in the pleasant meadows which still feed the flocks, as they fed the mothers of the Somersby flocks two generations of men ago.

And he was sure too that the "hollow behind the little wood," with its "rivulet tinkling from the rock," was one of their favourite haunts in the olden time. He corroborated the wonderful building powers of the Tennysons' man Horlins,—

"Why, you know, he wud have built for ivver if th' owd doctor wud let him, and it was he as kep the doctor to the great room this end of Rectory, and to the bit of kitchen at t' other."

As for faery stories and hob-goblins, he could say little. Nay, at first he was inclined to be a bit contemptuous of all "the whoale lot of sich rubbishment" but, seeing that I was solemnly and seriously inquisitive, he said, "Well i' my young daäys theer wur a deal of hover-looking, you know, by the hevil eye, and fwoaks had to go to the wise men. Theer was two, one Cossit, and one Stainton, was a deal considered hereabouts, and I member a man went to Cossit about three sheep as was stoalen, and he showed him the man's faäce i' a glass. Sich a hurly burly theer was in the chimley, time as the man was theer. And I mind a man as wur kidding

furze up on Harrington Hill and he felt hissel wished, and away he had to goä whether or noä, and noä time for his mittens or bill-hook, and couldn't help hissel not no moor nor a babby he couldn't, and he found hissen down at the public-house, 'Black Bull' mebbe, naay I weant saäy for sartin' sewerness which it wur at Tetford, and set theer fixed, you know, reight i' front of the fire, and the wise man as had wished him i' a cheer i' the kitchen a-waiting for him, and the fire burnt his faäce and scorched his knees, but by goy, he couldn't move, for sartin sewerness, not a hinch he couldn't, and the wise man said, 'You'd better move fra the fire a bit,' and the man said, 'If you please I will.' Ay that's what he said, if you please, for he knawed the wise man had him fixed, fast as a rat i' a trap. But about the witches, well you know witches is clean gone by. I doant beleev i' them—doä you, sir?"

I was obstinately silent, and, seeing a certain faith in me that my silence seemed to assure him of, the old fellow continued

"There was a witch at Scamblesby did a deal o' harm i' her daäy, jumped on a man's herse as he was riding from market, but he hed a hook i' his hand and he hout at her, and drew blood. You know if you could scrawm a witch and draw blood, she was done. But they was ower-eardlins bad to git at. They chaänged so sudden. There was a

witch as overset waggins a deal, and she changed into a hare and back agean into a woman, quick as owt. But, however, theer was a man at Tetford had gitten a splayed bitch and watched and set on her, and she caught th' owd thing just as it went into the cat-hole, and tore a great piece outen her, it did, and when they oppened the cottage door, she was sitten at her taäble before the fire, saëme as if nowt hed happened, but they found the blood on the floor, and dog set on her and tore her to pieces. But why, you know, it was Satan's work as was back of the whole business, we know, sir, it must hev' been, and when Cossit coomed to die, and a laädy went to see him, his groaning was terrible, and I suppose he said, 'I've lived a wise man, but I shall die a fool.' Well, times is straängen haltered howivver sin' them daäys," and the old fellow went off into an account of the ways times had "chaänged."

I will not weary the reader with more than two points which lend light to some passages of the Laureate's work.

"You know," said the old man, "the wold in them daäys was just a complete wilderness, a mask of rabbits, nowt nobbut rabbits, and a deal o' fowk got oop i' the shire by sellin' theer grey owd jackets, and many a poor man hes got shotten over them rabbits."

"How do you mean?"

"Why, in them daäys they wud shoot poachers like dogs, they wud. I mind one hed gi'en 'em the slip twice, and third time they ketched him, as he was gitten ower a fence, and downed him. Theer wur a many as no one knew as was cured upon them warrens wi' lead pills."

So, then, the poet who spoke of the "garden and the wild," as he contrasted Somersby with the broad rolling rabbit warren above, and who wrote of the dreary wold, knew well what he was about in thus describing them.

"You know we was all poor i' them daäys, baäked on cow-cassons, cow-muck rolled i' the sun, and ate moästlins barley bread, and rabbits wur tempting when flesh-meat couldn't be hed."

"Barley bread," I said.

"Yees, a deäl of the wheät was nivver sown or thowt of. It was amoäst all barley when I was a boy."

Here again was a hint of the Laureate's accuracy of local observation:

> "Only reapers, reaping early
> In among the bearded barley."

I bade my old friend adieu. The last I saw of him was a puff of grey-blue smoke, and I sauntered off, determined to see his elder brother,

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who seems to have claimed a share in the early education of the Tennyson boys.

As luck would have it, the same day a storm of wind drove me to shelter in a cottage near Harrington, whose kindly housewife spoke enthusiastically of her memories of Mrs. Tennyson and the children. "They would very often pass this way, Mrs. Tennyson in her donkey cheer; and what I allus notished was that the childer all seemed so fond of her, was all about her like bees, you may say. And they growed up sich a find handsome set. It was more than thirty years after I saw a figure coming along to call on my next door neighbour, who was nusmaid along of the family. They nivver forgot theer servants. And I saäys, 'Ann,' I saäys, 'I've not seen none of them for thirty years, but that's a Tennyson by his walk.' And it was an all; such fine, up-straight men they all were, and sich heads of hair and sich a walk! Oh, they were well-beloved hereabout, the gells almost as clivver and high-larnt as the boys, I suppose, but nothing wi' theer hands, you know—nivver could sampler, nor knit, nor sew, nor nowt, leastways Ann used to say so; but they was all for theer mother. If Ann 'ed nobbut been living, she could have telled ye a deal."

"Is her husband alive?" I asked.

"Yees, and hearty, I'll warnt him, for an owd man, you know."

And just as I left the cottage, up he came, old H., with the cherry in his cheeks still, and an eye like a hawk, though a hawk's never twinkled quite so merrily. He had heard all by hearsay from his wife, had never seen th' owd doctor, "but Ann talked for ivver of the boys and gells. She used to saäy that th' owd doctor did the schoolin' and give 'em a deal of it, was maäzin' particular about lessons; but the mother was best teacher after all, for she 'ud taäk em owt when she went in the cheer, and read to them and talk wi' them, Ann used to saäy, and they looved her, would a done owt for her, and she was proud of 'em, stock and lot, was Mrs. Tennyson; and like enew, for she seeäd it was in 'em, yees, she seeäd it was in 'em, that's what she seeäd."

Old H. did not know that he had from the nursemaid heard much what his interrogator had heard years before from one of the Tennyson brothers himself. "We always," said Charles Tennyson Turner to me one day at Grasby, when he was showing me the portrait of his mother, "we always, as boys, turned to her for encouragement. We had the greatest reverence for his learning, but my father never let us know what he thought of our poetry, used to tell us to

mind our books, for that we could never get bread by such stuff; but my mother delighted in our work, would, when we went out for our walks with her, read her favourite poems—*Beattie's Calendar*, I remember, was one of them—to us. I think I can see her now, waiting with us on the road for the carrier from Louth to come over Tetford Hill, bringing the proofs of our first book of poems for correction."

"She loved them and they loved her, bless you; she knew what was in them:" the old man said it with real feeling, and they were the last words I heard.

I must not omit to mention one other matter which shows how the Tennyson family made itself one with the village and how the villagers seemed to feel that the joys and sorrows of the Rectory were theirs. The two old women who spoke with remembrance of the days that are dead, both asked after the sister, by name, who was engaged to her brother's greatest friend. Both inquired, touchingly, Did she ever marry? in an earnest manner, that made me feel that they in a dim way had entered, if only by hearsay and as outsiders at the time, into the sorrow that was laid on the hearts of all those at the Somersby Rectory, who loved Arthur Hallam, when "in Vienna's fatal walls" "God's finger touch't him, and he slept."

It was with feelings of real regret that one could learn so little, from lips so apparently simple, truthful, and sincere, of the old Tennysonian times; but half a century and more had elapsed since the family had left Lincolnshire. Year by year for that half century and more some memory had faded "from off the circle of the hills"; but the remembrance of the simple kindliness and sympathy with the people which had characterised the Rectory in Tennyson times was fresh in mind and tradition. It was not a little remarkable that the scholarship, originality, and power of "th' owd doctor," as they called him, the ability both of his sons and his daughters, and the sweetness of that tender mother of the poets, should have left so indelible an impression upon peasant minds.

What struck me in the district was the way in which Alfred Tennyson's personality had impressed itself on the simple people. There were old folk at Spilsby, at Louth, at Horncastle, who could remember either what "Mr. Halfred," as they called him, was like when a boy, or had heard their mothers and fathers tell them of their remembrances.

As bad luck would have it, I was unable to see old C., the man who had grounded the Tennyson lads in arithmetic up at the manor house in their

HORNCASTLE.

school holidays, nor could I get speech with the old lady, then in her 82nd year, a Mrs. T., who had been sewing maid at the Tennysons' for seven years, but I asked a neighbour to go over, at the first opportunity, and interview them. The gist of his letter is as follows:

"I found Mr. C. at home, but it was as hard to get anything out of him as out of a Scot. He said he wished he had kept some account of those Tennyson lads, for at different times he had had a 'deal o' people at him.' He said he was about twenty when he went to teach them the rule of three and practice. He is now in his 83rd year. He remembered how the boys were always scribbling about on bits of paper when he was giving them lessons. Mr. Alfred was pretty easily instructed and 'larned' fast. The eldest was then at college, and was proud and silent. Mr. Charles was the pleasantest to deal with of the whole lot. When old C. was up at the house looking after the 'rithmatic,' the doctor would be instructing in some language he could not understand, and he was 'maäzing sharp with them, mind you, was the owd doctor.'

"As for the mother, 'she was the gentlest laädy we ivver clapped eyes on.' He spoke proudly, I thought, of being competent to have been called in to give his pupils their 'summer' lessons, for, as he explained, 'all the larnin' he ever got' he had

scratched up at the disused bath-house down in Holywell wood, which had been converted into the village school. He remembered that there was a barber's shop down by the school near the well." My friend continued:

"I called also on the old servant of the Tennysons, Mrs. T. She was much more communicative, and, though now 82 years old, remembered as if it were yesterday, the day when, as a girl of 11, she went to her first place 'along o' the Tennysons.' Mr. Arthur she spoke of as 'a poor creature,' meaning that he was very delicate. Mr. Charles was straängen nice, but as for 'Mr. Halfred,' he was a 'dacious' one. He used to be 'walking up and down the carriage drive hundreds of times a day, shouting and holloaing and preaching, with a book always in his hand; and such a lad for making sad work of his clothes.' He never seemed to care how he was dressed or what he had on 'down on his heels,' and 'his coat unlaced and his hair anyhow.' 'He was a rough un, was Mister Halfred, and no mistake,' and she laughed heartily as the picture of the lad came back to memory; but she could not keep her mind to the poet; the young 'laädies,' who were evidently her favourites, were always coming in to obscure or blot out the less honoured boys, and yet in her blindness she said, 'I can see them all now, and I could have liked to have heard Mr. Halfred's voice again; such

a voice it was.' She remembered, too, how fond 'Mr. Halfred' was of going to see the poor people, and how he would often read to them, from cottage to cottage.

"The old body spoke, I thought, lovingly of her mistress, and said it was such a pity 'that they took her away to Cheltenham to bury her, poor thing.' She thought that they ought to have opened the owd doctor's great tombstone and just 'popped her in.' I ought to have mentioned that the old road surveyor, and one-time tutor in arithmetic, said he wished I would tell the poet that his 'summing' teacher is still alive, and remembers him. I think he meant that he wanted to be remembered by him, for he spoke of being in rather low water, but he did not say so, and I may have misunderstood him. What struck me was the pride old C. took in his having had a hand, as he thought, in the making of the poet, and the great pleasure old Mrs. T. took in her memories of the Tennyson children."

It was not only at Somersby that tradition of the poet's boyhood lingered on. Down by the shore of the Wash, at Mablethorpe, and at Skegness, with its far-receding tidal sea, its wastes of wrinkled sand, its shining creeks, its wind-blown rushy "rampire," had young Tennyson wandered and gathered the shell "small, but a work divine," had heard the great seas fall head-heavy upon the beach, or watched them "draw backward from the land their moon-led waters

white," and lost in thought had paced "the sands, marbled with moon and cloud." For Skegness, or Skeggy, as it was more familiarly called in those days, was the rendezvous of all the local gentry between Horncastle and the coast. A Lincolnshire squire discovered Skegness, and his sister, Miss Walls, built a house for herself and an hostel for their friends, —hostel sacred in my memory by reason of certain curd cheesecakes made, as none other before or since has made them, by Dame Hildred, the hostess.

Thither, as lads, the Tennysons came, and the coastguard men and the shrimpers knew them well. Skeggy was not a second Blackpool then, and these old fellows—some of whom had fought with Nelson —as they paced the sea-blown "rampire" saw an occasional "booby-hutch," or covered car, coming from miles away, across "the waste, enormous marsh." If it was not Rawnsley's, or Maddison's, or Alington's, or Massingberd's, or Walls', or Brackenbury's, it was Tennyson's "booby-hutch" that came from afar across the wonderful whispering marsh, whose "trenched waters ran from sky to sky"; and as sure as the Tennysons came to Skegness, Skegness made a note of it.

No one, child or grey-beard, who came to the sea in those days wore shoes or socks, and the bare-legged sons and daughters of "th' owd doctor" were out on the sands from morn till night.

MRS. TENNYSON.

Four miles north or north-east of Skegness lay Gibraltar Point, a very sea-wilderness. The sea at low tide went out of sight, and left samphire-covered flats and tiny rivulets of salt sea water and cockles; further and further it receded and left bare to the sunshine miles on miles of mud that shone like burnished ore. Nothing but the great stakes that guided the fisher-boats at flow of tide, broke the level prospect, save here and there a rusted anchor or the ribs of a wreck. The silence of the vast world of mud and sand and samphire was only disturbed by the cry of stints or curlew; it was to this sea-wilderness, devoid of man, that Alfred Tennyson delighted to wander. It was by pure accident I learned this.

Once, going in to rest at the only farm-house seen for miles near Gibraltar Point, I fell to talking with the old inhabitant. He had just been getting his crop of pears, and pointed out the way in which the earwigs had made havoc with some of them.

"Straängely constituted things them bottle-twigs is, as God Omighty knaws; be dalled, if they hevn't gone with the best of my pears to year, and pears is as hard as owt. I niver seed nobbut one as could manash them peärs, as th' owd bottle-twigs has manashed them, for sartin sewerness, and that was young Mr. Alfred when he was a boy."

"What young Mr. Alfred was that?" I asked.

"Why, Mr. Alfred; you know Mr. Alfred. Ivvery one, in them daäys, knew Mr. Alfred hereabout, howivver. You've heard tell of Mr. Alfred Tennyson, the owd doctor's son, straänge friend of owd Mr. Rownsley, as built the house at Skegsnest?" The old fellow was wrong as to the builder, but I assented, and he continued: "He was straängen fond o' the jam as well as the peärs, was Mr. Alfred. My missus ud saäy, 'Now, here's Mr. Alfred a-cooming; we must git the jam ready'; and she would open the door and let cat out, for he was a regular boy for the cats, was Mr. Alfred. I remember our cat, poor thing, went up smoke-hole one time when he coomed in at the door, and Mr. Alfred said 'your cats is so shan, Mrs. G—,' and like enough, poor things. Not that he meant owt, but cats is sensible things and they know who's who, mind ye. We haven't heard tell of him for years, but he grew up a straängen greät man, I suppoase, and addles his bread by his writings; is worth some hundreds, they do saäy."

"Yes," I said. "I should think you might almost say he is worth some thousands, and not hundreds. He is the greatest poet of the land, and the Queen wishes to make him a grand lord for his work as a poet."

I shall not soon forget the astonishment that

came into the old man's face, as, hobbling to the back-kitchen door, he said, "Missus, do you hear what this young gentleman is saäying about Mr. Alfred? He saäy's he's wuth thousands by his potry!"

"Naäy, naäy, sir, you mun be mistäen; sewerly it's hundreds, not thousands. Well I nivver! Why, you know, i' them daäys, we thowt he wur daft. He was allus ramblin' off quite by hissen, wi'out a coat to his back and wi'out a hat to his head, nor nowt.

"I remember as if it wur nobbut yisterdaäy, my man, as was a fiddler bit of a fellow, was off to Hildred's theer at Skegsnest, to play fur quolity at a dance; and he was cooming hoam in the morning early, and, be-dashed, who should he light on but Mr. Alfred, a-raävin' and taävin' upon the sand-hills in his shirt sleeves an' all; and Mr. Alfred said, saäys he, 'Good morning,' saäys he; and my man saäys, 'Thou poor fool, thou doesn't knaw morning from night,' for you know, sir, i' them daäys we all thowt he was craäzed. Well, well! And the Queen wants to maäke him a lord, poor thing! Well, I nivver did hear the likes o' that, for sarten sewerness."

It was probably not at Gibraltar Point only that Tennyson was thought to be "craäzed, poor thing, i' them daäys"; nor did he as a boy only "taäve and raäve" about the sand-hills at Skegs-

nest. Eight miles to the north lay Mablethorpe, and thither, as Charles Tennyson, the elder brother, once told me, did he and Alfred repair on the day that their first volume of *Poems by Two Brothers* appeared in print, to celebrate the fact with boy-like joyousness.

"We hired a conveyance," said Tennyson Turner, "and drove off for the day, and shouted ourselves hoarse on the shore as we rolled out poem by poem in one another's ears. I think if anyone had met us they would have thought us out of our minds, and in a way I think that day we were indeed beside ourselves for joy."

Skegness is quite changed; Mablethorpe is Mablethorpe still; the same Mablethorpe whose magnificent lines of breaker and roller from the North Sea haunted the poet, and made him, when he was at Barmouth, long for such a sea as he remembered on the Mablethorpe beach—Mablethorpe with its rushy sand-dunes and its frequent rabbit holes, less frequent by far now than then. One can never think of those rabbit holes now without remembering the story told by Miss Fowler of the Vicar's sister, who began to read *Locksley Hall* to an old lady in the marsh near by, and was interrupted at the lines "Here about the beach I wander'd, nourishing a youth sublime," by the old lady laying down her knitting

and saying, as she pictured the sand-hills, "Nay, miss, doant you believe a word o' that, for there's nothing to nourish nobody here, be-out it was a rabbit, an' it's very rare you can get that!"

But rabbits or no rabbits, you may still in fancy see the poet, as a child, bare-legged, with long hair blown in the wind, wading in the shallows and racing with the tide that fills the creek; or later, find him as a school-lad, with his dream of Homeric sight and scene, laid in the sunshine of the sandy dune. He has left us a record of those Mablethorpe days of castle-building by the shore:

"How often when a child I lay reclined:
I took delight in this fair strand and free;
Here stood the infant Ilion of the mind,
And here the Grecian ships all seem'd to be.
And here again I come, and only find
The drain-cut level of the marshy lea,
Gray sand-banks, and pale sunsets, dreary wind,
Dim shores, dense rains, and heavy clouded sea."

The lovers of Tennyson who would fain know the Lincolnshire that of old inspired the Laureate will find in an unaltered Somersby, an unchanged Louth, and a changeless Mablethorpe and Gibraltar Point, the scenes that moved the boy-poet. They will find more: they will find a loyal love for the great Lincolnshire bard, and a tender memory of his boyhood's day.

CHAPTER III.

BOYHOOD'S FRIENDS IN LINCOLNSHIRE.

THERE were others beside the peasantry who remembered the poet in the old Lincolnshire days. The Barings, the Edens, the Rawnsleys grew up almost like one family party with the Tennysons. One of them, Rosa Baring, I only knew as a sweet old lady, then almost blind, but with a face full of animation, and with the faery complexion of a young girl of fifteen. I think her heart had kept tune somewhat to the youthful bloom upon her face. Often would she speak of the way in which she and her companions round Somersby, who were not too frightened of him, hung upon the words of the quaint, shy, long-haired young man, who had in his boyhood's day made an impression of being more learned and more thoughtful than was common, and seemed wise beyond his years. She would tell of how she and one of her girl friends, in admiration of

the young poet, would ride over to Somersby, just to have the pleasure of pleasing him or teasing him as the case might be. From time to time he would write a verse or two for one or other of the girls who had been with him at a picnic in the woods, or send some little birthday poem of congratulation or some verse of reconciliation after a tiff at a dance; and although she confessed that all poetry in those days seemed to her mere "jangledom," yet it was always delightful to her to believe that the "rose of the rosebud garden of girls," had reference to her. "Alfred, as we all called him, was so quaint and so chivalrous, such a real knight among men, at least I always fancied so; and though we joked one another about his quaint, taciturn ways, which were mingled strangely with boisterous fits of fun, we were proud as peacocks to have been worthy of notice by him, and treasured any message he might send or any word of admiration he let fall."

It was to Rosa Baring that he wrote in 1834:

"Thy rosy lips are soft and sweet,
Thy fairy form is so complete,
Thy motions are so airy free,
Love lays his armour at thy feet
And yields his bow to thee;
Take any dart from out his quiver
And pierce what heart thou wilt for ever."

And it was to her he sent, as birthday offering in 1836, the following dainty lines:

"Thy natal day awakens bright,
Once more that happy morn doth rise
Wherein thine eyes first saw the light
And light grew lighter for thine eyes.
So let the varying moments flee,
And, passing, change us less or more,
Whilst time himself, in love with thee,
But makes thee lovelier than before."

Another of the Lincolnshire girls in the Somersby neighbourhood who knew him well in his boyhood's day was my aunt, Sophy Rawnsley. She was a special favourite, and I think I can imagine the why and wherefore, for anything more full of vivacity and sparkle than this Aunt Sophy, as a girl, must have been, can hardly have been created. It was in mind of her he wrote—at least that was an article of faith in our family—"Airy, fairy Lilian," and that he was much attached to her in his days of calf-love, cannot, I think, well be doubted. In 1834 he wrote to her the following graceful sextette:

"Sweet, ask me not why I am sad,
But, when sad thoughts arise,
Look on me, make my spirit glad
To gaze upon thine eyes.
For how can sorrow dwell in mine
If they might always gaze on thine?"

In 1836, after a little quarrel at the Spilsby ball, he sent a sonnet to her, which she piously

treasured to the end of her life, and at least it seems to witness to an affectionate regard for her, from her childhood upward:

TO SOPHY, 1836.

To thee, with whom my best affections dwell,
That I was harsh to thee, let no one know;
It were, O Heaven! a stranger tale to tell
Than if the vine had borne the bitter sloe:
Tho' I was harsh, my nature is not so:
A momentary cloud upon me fell:
My coldness was mistimed like summer-snow
Cold words I spoke, yet loved thee warm and well.
Was I so harsh? Ah, dear, it could not be.
Seem'd I so cold? What madness moved my blood
To make me thus belie my constant heart
That watch't with love thine earliest infancy,
Slow-ripening to the grace of womanhood,
Thro' every change that made thee what thou art.[1]

But it would be very unsafe to surmise that this sonnet expressed more than the admiration he felt for a bright, happy girl whom he had known from her childhood, and who I expect was, with Rosa Baring, on terms of almost sisterly affection with him. It is, I think, clear that the poet, as a dancer, had, at times, a difficult passage to steer. The two girls who were his partners at the Spilsby ball, though they were bosom friends, were rivals for his society, perhaps for his admiration. This at any rate is suggested by the fact that, at the same time when he sends the sonnet

[1] The original MS. of this poem is still in my cousin's possession.

above quoted to Sophy Rawnsley, he addresses the two following ones to her girl friend, his other partner, with whom it seems he had a lover's quarrel at the same dance. The lines were repeated to me by the person to whom they were written :

TO ROSA, 1836.

I.

Sole rose of beauty, loveliness complete,
If those few words were bitter or unjust,
Yet is thy gentle nature so discreet
That they will pass thee like an idle gust.
Henceforward, fancy shall not force distrust,
But all my blood in time to thine shall beat,
Henceforth I lay my pride within the dust
And my whole heart is vassal at thy feet.
Blow, summer rose, thy beauty makes me shamed
That I could blame thee! Heavens dewdrop pure
Bathe, with my tears, thy maiden blossom sweet:
Blow, summer rose, nor fall; and, oh, be sure
That if I had not loved, I had not blamed;
For my whole heart is vassal at thy feet.

II.

By all my grief for that which I did say,
By all the life of love that never dies,
By all that Paradise for which we pray
And all the Paradise that round thee lies,
By thoughts of thee that like the Heavens rise,
Star after star, within me, day by day,
And night by night, in musing on thine eyes,
Which look me through when thou art far away,
By that madonna grace of parted hair
And dewy sister eyelids drooping chaste,

By each dear foot, so light on field, or floor,
By thy full form and slender moulded waist,
And that all perfect smile of thine, I swear
That these rash lips shall blame thee, Rose, no more.[1]

I often talked with my Aunt Sophy about Tennyson, and I found that the kind of awe with which he had inspired her had not passed away. "He was," she said, "so interesting because he was so unlike other young men, and his unconventionality of manner and dress had a charm which made him more acceptable than the dapper young gentleman of the ordinary type, at ball or supper party. He was a splendid dancer, for he loved music, and kept such time, but, you know," she would say, "we liked to talk better than to dance together, at Horncastle, or Spilsby, or Halton; he always had something worth saying, and said it so quaintly. Most girls were frightened of him. I was never afraid of the man, but of his mind."

My Aunt's testimony to the poet's love of dancing was borne out by others who remembered how, in those old days, he had a passion for it. I remember his telling my brother how, at the age of 60, he had danced a waltz with a partner whom he had tired out, and said, "I was not a bit giddy at the end of that dance."

Talking once of those old dancing days at

[1] Copies of these poems were given to my Mother by Rosa Baring.

Horncastle and Spilsby, Tennyson said, "I remember that sometimes in the midst of the dance, a great and sudden sadness would come over me, and I would leave the dance and wander away beneath the stars, or sit on gloomily and abstractedly below stairs. I used to wonder then, what strange demon it was, that drove me forth and took all the pleasure from my blood, and made me such a churlish curmudgeon. I now know what it was. It was gout."

The awe with which he seemingly possessed the minds of the young people he came in contact with was not a little remarkable. "He looked you thro' and thro' and made you feel that he was taking stock of you from head to toe," a lady once said to me, who had met him in those early days, but I suspect it was the taciturnity of the man and the quaint way he had of asking direct questions of those he met, almost as it would seem, with a view to see what effect the question would have upon the questioned one, that inspired something of the aforenamed awe, and the unconventionality which came of his absolutely fearless naturalness astonished them.

My mother felt the same kind of awe of him. She often told me of a certain dinner party at the Sellwoods, whither she and her uncle Sir John Franklin had gone to meet their new connexions

from Somersby. Charles Tennyson had just married her cousin Louisa Sellwood. It was in 1836. "I shall never forget," she wrote, "my first impressions. The door opened and in came two very remarkable, tall, broad-chested men, one lighter-haired than the other, but both with hair longer than was usual, quite out of the common in appearance, men whom you would speak of as more than *distinguished*, I should say, *noble* in appearance. One was Frederick, the other Alfred Tennyson; with them entered the most beautiful woman I thought I had ever seen; this was Mary, their sister. Alfred Tennyson was told off to take me down to dinner and I remember well to this day, the kind of awe of the man that came over me as we entered the dining-room. We were separated by a mistake of the servant who showed us to our seats, and my awe was not lessened when I saw him put up his eye-glasses and look me thro' and thro'. I remember well how the unconventional free and easy way in which, as soon as he left the room, he had lit his pipe—(smoking after dinner was not so common then as it is now) vexed the soul of Sir John, who as an old naval officer held strong ideas about deference to seniors even when not on shipboard—but the thing I most remember is that when the gentlemen came to the drawing-room and I was set down to play, Alfred Tennyson at once left off

talking, came up close to the piano and sat watching, as he said, 'the sparkle in the rings of Zobeide,' as my fingers moved over the keys, The awe of him quite unnerved me and I expect I played but ill."

But the queen of his heart was Emily Sellwood. The blood of an old Berkshire race was in her on the Sellwood side, and on her mother's side she came from a Lincolnshire yeoman stock that gave the nation much help in time of need. For her mother was a Franklin, one of whose brothers did good work in the East India Company's service as a brave soldier; another of them—my grandfather—died too young, as Judge of the High Court at Madras; and a third brother, Sir John, the Arctic navigator, went fearlessly to the frozen North and forged the last link of the North-West Passage with his life.

He first met her in 1830 in the Fairy Glen at Somersby, when, as she moved, a girl of seventeen, in her simple grey dress, through the springtide woodland, he had said to her, "Are you a dryad or oread wandering here?" He met her again six years after, as bridesmaid to her sister at his brother Charles's wedding, and, though no engagement was permitted, the lovers corresponded with one another for three years between 1838-1840, and fragments of this correspondence are preserved

to us in the seventh chapter of the "Memoir of Tennyson" by his son. After 1840 the correspondence was forbidden, and, for the next seven years, the lovers ate out their hearts of love in secret. Then Tennyson again came forward, and this time was refused on the highest and noblest principles of self-abnegation by the woman who loved him. Emily Sellwood had grown to feel that they two moved in worlds of religious thought so different that the two would not "make one music" as they moved. But that heart of hers, like her own blue eyes, was as true as her faith was "clear as the heights of the June-blue Heaven," and she was happy in having as confidante a cousin whom she could trust, and in whom her lover, the poet, also confided. So it came to pass that my mother brought the lovers together, and on the 13th June, 1850, the very month in which "In Memoriam" was published, the lovers were happily married from Shiplake Vicarage, by my father, the Vicar of the parish.

It has been one of my life's privileges to see the letters that passed in those days, before the marriage was arranged, letters in which she always used the thou and thee in addressing my mother, after the quaint fashion of the time—letters which she usually signed "thy affectionate sister"; and the sweetest thing, to my mind, in them is the effect

of the revelation of the poet's strong faith in God that the MS. of "In Memoriam" made on the tender spiritual nature of his future wife. She did not know then, as perhaps she may have afterwards come to see, that, in that noble poem of sorrow for loss, met and mastered, there was not only an Arthur Hallam, but an Emily Sellwood loved and lost, whose memory was enshrined. I used to talk with my old nurse of that happy wedding day. She dressed the bride for her bridal, and spoke of the beautiful eyes and hair and the sky-blue dress, and she always ended by saying, "Ah, how she loved him, and how proud he seemed of her, and what a pair they looked as they walked on the lawn afterwards." The bride never forgot the nurse who put upon her her wedding apparel. In a letter to my mother in 1884 she speaks of that old nurse, Self, by name, and makes mention of the sky-blue dress.

Six months after, they came for a visit back to "the Vicarage by the quarry," and my mother drove to Reading with the poet. She noticed he was very silent, but, as he left the carriage, he put a bit of MS. into her hands with the words, "Give that to Dubbie" (my father's name was Drummond), and he added, "Don't let him publish it without my leave or till I am dead."

It has not yet been published in full, for Lord

Tennyson, his father's biographer, did not give two verses from the MS. now in my brother's possession, thinking that, as they were not part of the wedding-day poem, they ought not to be printed with it. I cannot pretend to understand how it came about that there was a different edition of that poem. Tennyson may have simply added the two verses to the original piece, on the day he drove, six months after his wedding, away from the Vicarage, and my mother may not have known that any portion of the former poem was extant before that drive. Be that as it may, the verses thus left out are so noble and touching a testimony to the beauty of his mother's character, that her son will hold me guiltless if I dare to supply the omission. I have copied exactly the poem from the original in Tennyson's own hand-writing which lies before me. It will be seen that there are two corrections in his own MS. in the first two lines of verse 3, and that there are variations in the second verse of the poem as it appears in the memoir. It is clear that Tennyson must have made two copies of the poem. I think the one he sent my father is the final form. The poem was prefaced with a short note as follows :

"Dear Drummond,—I send you my poem, made for the most part in your own carriage, between Shiplake and

Reading. Keep it to yourself as I should have kept it to myself if Kate had not asked for it, *i.e.* keep it till I give you leave to make it public.—Ever yours,

"A. TENNYSON."

TO THE VICAR OF SHIPLAKE.

Vicar of that pleasant spot,
  Where it was my chance to marry,
Happy, happy be your lot
  In the Vicarage by the quarry:
You were he that knit the knot.

Sweetly, smoothly flow your life.
  Never parish feud perplex you,
Tithe unpaid, or party strife.
  All things please you, nothing vex you;
You have given me such a wife.

(Then follow the two verses spoken of.)

Have I seen[1] in one so near
  Aught but sweetness aye[2] prevailing?
Or, thro' more than half a year,
  Half the fraction of a failing?
Therefore bless you, Drummond dear.

Good she is, and pure and just.
  Being conquer'd by her sweetness
I shall come thro' her, I trust,
  Into fuller-orb'd completeness;
Tho' but made of erring dust.

You, meanwhile, shall day by day
  Watch your standard roses blowing,
And your three young things at play,
  And your triple terrace growing
Green and greener every May.

[1] Found. [2] All.

Smoothly flow your life with Kate's,
Glancing off from all things evil,
Smooth as Thames below your gates,
Thames along the silent level
Streaming thro' his osier'd aits.

Those who knew how that good and pure and just one conquered by her sweetness all who crossed her way, will realise how entirely truthful a picture this was that the poet drew of her, whom, "after long years of pain" he had been able to make his own. If ever there was "a woman nobly planned, to guide, to comfort, to command," it was Emily Sellwood. I only remember her fine face and beautiful smile, when she was more than three score years and ten, but her voice and her smile are with me to this day.

The impression I got of her, as she lay back in her invalid couch, in the Farringford drawing-room, was that of a being whose tender spirit filled the house. Some years after, I met one who, as tutor to her sons, had been a member of the poet's household. Speaking of Lady Tennyson, he said, "I have never met any one who seemed to me so not of this world; a being so purely spiritual, a being such as Wordsworth describes the ideal woman to be:

'Bright
With something of an angel light!'"

CHAPTER IV.

TENNYSON AT THE ENGLISH LAKES.

THE last time I saw Lord Tennyson, he spoke with enthusiasm of his memories of the Lake Country. "I could have wished," he said, "to see your hills and lakes again. I remember the colour and the cloud upon the fells and the sound and the clearness of your streams. But I am too old, and the journey is far; I shall not see them again in this mortal body." I did not say anything; it seemed as if the old poet was half thinking to himself aloud, that, if not in the body, yet he had it in mind to believe that out of the body he would yet perhaps visit the English lakes, and look upon the scenes he held so fair.

It was college friendship that brought him first to Cumberland, and as he spoke he must have been in mind of those old days of Cambridge apostleship, which were in some ways the most memorable of his life. It was at Cambridge he

became close friends with James Spedding, the Baconian, and Fitzgerald of Omar Khayyám fame. Tom Spedding, the elder brother, of whom Carlyle once said, "He is the only man who really understands me," had left his tutorial work at Trinity before Tennyson went up to college. But Tennyson would meet him at his father's, John Spedding's, either at Bury St. Edmunds or in Queen Square. It was there, too, in his vacation visits to the Spedding family, that Tennyson must have come to know that delicate, dark-eyed younger brother —who seemed more like a spirit than an ordinary mortal—Edward, who died at the age of 21, in 1833, and of whom, in the touching lines to J. S., the poet wrote:

> "I knew your brother! His mute dust
> I honour, and his living worth.
> A man more pure and bold and just
> Was never born into the earth."

But it was not till 1835 that Tennyson became acquainted with the Cumberland home of the Speddings—the House by the Mere—Mirehouse, by Bassenthwaite, under Skiddaw. Tennyson, writing from Somersby, had proposed a visit to James Spedding in February of that year. "I have," said he, "an inclination to come and see you and, if possible, to bring you back with me here. Can I learn that men are wise and not look them

in the face? I will come to you as Sheba came to Solomon." But he writes—in March, probably—to postpone the visit: "The birds must sing and the gorse bloom for you and Fitzgerald alone—*par nobile fratrum!*" Within a month he returned to his first intent, and Mirehouse in the spring, with such noble brotherhood as "old Fitz," and James Spedding won the day.

What Tennyson thought of "old Fitz," as he called him, we know from the poem he wrote forty years after. He had seen much of him at Cambridge, more of him in London, those days; at "Gliddon's" and the "Cock and Bull" and "Crown"; those

> "gracious times
> When, in our younger London days,
> You found some merit in my rhymes,
> And I more pleasure in your praise."

Mirehouse in April is at its best. The great grove of Scotch fir seems bluer in head and ruddier in stem against the evening light. The larches on Skiddaw, rising above the firs, have just put on their tenderest green, and fill the air with fragrance. Daffodils shine in the meadows by the lake. The sweet gale, not yet in leaf, is rosy-bronze in the marshland, and the alders are golden-russet for their catkins. Lambs cry from the home meadow, and the ravens, as they sail over to Skiddaw Forest, almost have a kind of

geniality in their voice, and for a moment forget their dolorous croaking. Far away to the south the last snow fades on the blue hill-fastnesses of Borrowdale, and the long-lighted evenings, with their saffron glory over Wythop, prolong the springtide day, and keep the thrushes singing till the star-time.

At such a time came to the House by the Mere the young Cambridge poet to delight his soul, and the souls of his friends, 'with talk of knightly deeds,' walking about the gardens and the hall, for he had brought with him in manuscript his poem "Morte D'Arthur." Many a time as I have paced the dewy pebbles of Bassenthwaite lake, or Broadwater, as it used to be called, in thought, and heard the ripple washing in the reeds, or seen the water brighten to the moon, or wandered to the little church that stands to the north of a spit of land jutting out into the lake, I have felt that it is possible that in the writing and rewriting of that noble passage that tells the "passing of Arthur," the poet may have, almost unconsciously, woven to his verse the colour and the sound, the sight and scene, of beautiful Mire-house.

Nor can one ever now come to Windermere on a still May-day without thought of Excalibur and the Lady of the Lake. With the making

of that poem in mind one remembers how Tennyson, gazing down into the clear depths, while old Fitz leaned upon the oar, quoted to him the lines:

> "Nine years she wrought it, sitting in the deeps
> Upon the hidden bases of the hills,"

and added, in his quaint, gruff way, "Not bad that, Fitz, is it?"[1]

It was a delightful holiday, that April and May spent at Mirehouse. The weather was not of the best, but the friends had too much to talk about and smoke over to care for wind or rain-showers. And if we may trust the pencil sketches, James Spedding and Fitzgerald made of their friend, the Tennysonian cloak—that bit of real old coaching-day impedimenta, which he never discarded—was proof against storm.

The only person in that household at Mirehouse who would at all feel out of tune to the hammering out of the Tennysonian poem would be the master of the house himself.

The days were spent in roaming and reading; the evening was filled with recitations of Wordsworth's poems—"Michael," the "Yews of Borrowdale," the "Ode on Intimations of Immortality," the "Solitary Reaper." And while Fitzgerald played chess with Mrs. Spedding, there would, doubtless, at times be talk on politics and short-

[1] Cf. *Tennyson: A Memoir*, vol. I., p. 193.

horns with the host. Politics and shorthorns were much more to the practically-minded squire than Tennysonian poetry.

Handsome John Spedding, as he used to be called when he was captain of the Forty-eighth, had given up arms; and, after having seen, not without some self-sacrifice—for he was not a wealthy man—that his sons had the best education they could get, had removed from London to his Cumberland estate, and given his whole mind to political reform of the country and to the reform of agriculture in the county. He was a taciturn man, with a great sense of humour, which, he used to say, ran in the blood, for the Spedding's stock, it was believed, originally came from Ireland; and anyone who gazes upon the portrait now in possession of his grandson at Windebrowe, will see not only that he was a man of great will and character, but of intellectuality also. James Spedding got more than his dome of brow and his hazel eyes from his father: he got his brains from him also. There are those alive still who speak of the iron will of John Spedding, the father, which made itself felt at every turn. The household knew what he wished; he seldom spoke twice. When he did speak in reproof, there was such a quiet about the manner of it, it cut deep. A friend who remembers those old days at Mirehouse, speaking of this way

of his, said that some one of the servants had objected to blacking so many pairs of the young ladies' boots. The master of the house rang the bell and asked for the servant, and said quietly: "I hear you don't like to clean Miss Spedding's boots, so it will be a great pleasure to me to do it; and you can bring the blacking and the brushes to me to-morrow morning."

I daresay there was something to be said on the servant's side of the question, for Mr. John Spedding went in "for plain living and high thinking." His ideal for Mirehouse was "a thoroughly comfortable farmhouse," as he once expressed it, "plentiful, hospitable, but no show." A garden he would have, but it must be for use. He would never make a dry path to the lake, because, said he, ladies should wear strong shoes. The consequence was that there was a rebellion in the boot-blacking room, with the result above mentioned.

I have sometimes thought that Tennyson had this squire of Mirehouse in his mind when he wrote those beautiful lines, as prologue to the "Gardener's Daughter," which he left unpublished, but are to be found in *Tennyson: A Memoir*, vol. I., p. 199:

> "Admire that stalwart shape, those ample brows,
> And that large table of the breast dispread
> Between low shoulders; how demure a smile,
> How full of wisest humour and of love,
> With some half-consciousness of inward power,

Sleeps round those quiet lips: not quite a smile.
And look you what an arch the brain has built
Above the ear! And what a settled mind,
Mature, harbour'd from change, contemplative,
Tempers the peaceful light of hazel eyes,
Observing all things."

This may be a mere fancy, and it is possible that James Spedding's hazel eyes and high brow may have gone to the making of the picture, but there is so much that well accords with the portrait of John Spedding that one dares to quote the lines and hazard the suggestion. But this strong-willed, soldierly, intellectual man was not in love with the poets; they were not practical enough to please him, and, as Fitzgerald has left on record, "he rather resented his young guests making so serious a business of verse-making, though he was so wise and charitable as to tolerate everything and everybody, except poetry and poets. He was jealous of his son James applying his great talents, which might have been turned to public practical use, to such nonsense."

It is easy to understand how it came to pass that most of the reading of the MS. poems in the little red note-book was done of a night "when the house was mute." How late at night one can easily guess from the fact that the custom of the household appears to have been to go to sleep till about ten in the evening, and then wake up and talk brilliantly and earnestly till past midnight. What a time of

it they must have had, those three friends, in those nocturnal sessions at Mirehouse, when they varied their criticism upon the draft of the "Lord of Burleigh" and "Morte D'Arthur" by making fun of Wordsworth at his prosiest, and seeing who could invent the weakest line in the most Wordsworthian manner. Fitzgerald claimed the palm with his line:

"A Mr. Wilkinson, a clergyman."[1]

Some time towards the end of May, Tennyson went over the Raise Gap, and saw Westmoreland. He did not call on Wordsworth, though James Spedding did his best to get him there, as Spedding wrote to Fitzgerald, "He would and would not (sulky one)," and it was not till after Southey's death that he met Wordsworth at Moxon's.

But he saw "Lile" Hartley, and was charmed with his talk. "Hartley was wonderfully eloquent; I liked Hartley; he was a loveable little fellow." That was his verdict; and how well Hartley Coleridge returned the compliment may be judged by all who read the sonnet he wrote, entitled, "To Alfred Tennyson, after seeing him for the first time," which concludes:

"Knowing thee now a real earth-treading man,
Not less I love thee, and no more I can."

Tennyson stayed a few days at Ambleside, but beyond his water excursion on Windermere with

[1] Cf. *Tennyson: A Memoir*, vol. I., p. 153.

TENNYSON ON BOARD THE "LEEDS," 1830.

Fitzgerald, one cannot trace him in that neighbourhood. He did not know that he had friends at Fieldhead, or he would probably have gone, for Arthur Hallam's sake, to see them. Had he presented himself there, he would have been warmly welcomed by the Hardens, who had met him on that eventful return journey from the Pyrenees, where he had gone in 1830 with money for the insurgents under Torrijos.

The Miss Harden of that day, now Mrs. Clay, still lives in her quiet home of Miller-bridge, by the banks of the Rotha, and possesses the interesting pencil sketch her father made of Tennyson, sprawled upon the deck of the Bordeaux steamer, in his top hat and long Inverness cape or coaching coat, with books strewn at his feet, and talking to the delighted audience of fair girls in magnificent coal-scuttle bonnets, and another sketch of his friend, Arthur Hallam, laid on his back, reading Sir Walter Scott to his guests. She has preserved to this day vivid memories of the voyage and of her interesting fellow-passengers. She writes me: "In the summer of 1830 my father, mother, and sister, with myself, spent the summer in the Pyrenees, and started from Bordeaux on the 8th of September in the steamer 'Leeds' for Dublin. Our fellow-passengers were four gentlemen—two of them Mr Robertson, of Glasgow, and his cousin, of whom we knew something through my mother's relatives, and two others,

who were none other than Mr. Tennyson and his friend Mr. Hallam. The weather was fine, and we were sitting on deck. Mr. Hallam was a very interesting, delicate-looking young man, and we saw nothing of him the first day; he was in the saloon. The second day was warm, and he came on deck, and kindly read to us some of Scott's novels, which had recently been published in one volume. We were all much charmed with our group of fellow-passengers. In my father's original pencil sketch Mr. Tennyson had a large cape, a tall hat, and a very decided nose."

I have often seen the drawings, and feel that they take one back into an old world of dress and fashion, long since passed away, and that so entirely that one can as little believe that the young lady listening to Arthur Hallam's rendering of Scott's novel is my old friend at Miller-bridge, as one can imagine it possible for the tall-hatted, becloaked-looking beau of 1830, sprawled upon the deck of the "Leeds," to have been the Lord Laureate of our later day; and yet so it was. If only Mrs. Harden had known it, she might have asked for, and perhaps have heard that dark, foreign, almost Spanish-looking man, with the long hair and the long cloak, quote line after line from the "Œnone," which the Pyrenees had inspired him to write. But to go back to Windermere.

ARTHUR HALLAM ON BOARD THE "LEEDS," 1830.

Tennyson did not return to Mirehouse, and Fitzgerald went off to Manchester and Warwick, full of the lines of "Morte d'Arthur," and full of the impression of Tennyson's quaintness and grumpiness and greatness of soul and mind. Tennyson never saw Southey. There was, however, destined to be a connexion between himself and the Greta Hall poet before the next decade had run. Southey died in 1843. At the time it was known that owing to some monetary losses, occasioned by a speculation in "wood carving by machinery," which, mercifully for the art of the carver, failed, Tennyson's private property had vanished into thin air. He was himself so distressed, not for himself but for others of the family who had misplaced their confidence and their cash, through the inducements of a physician near Beech Hill, who had conceived the idea of "wood carving by machinery," that he was dangerously near a complete breakdown of health. His friends knew this, and felt that, since at Southey's death the Laureateship was vacant, great efforts should be made to obtain the post for him.

Amongst the papers which were left by Fanny Kemble were the following; by the kindness of Miss Frances Power Cobbe they came into my possession. The first is a note, in Mrs. Butler's handwriting, which explains the correspondence.

"This note was sent to me by the late Earl of Ellesmere—then Lord Francis Egerton—to whom I had written, at the suggestion of my friend, Mr. Proctor (Barry Cornwall), to solicit the Laureateship, vacant by the death of Southey, for Alfred Tennyson, whose small fortune had been much reduced by the imprudent speculations of a friend. Lord Francis Egerton applied to Lord De la Warr, then Lord Chamberlain, upon the subject, and received this reply, which he forwarded to me. (At Mr. Wordsworth's death, Alfred Tennyson was appointed Poet Laureate.)"

13 Upper Harley Street,
26th March, 1843.

My dear Mrs. Butler,—It has occurred to me that it may be possible to obtain for Alfred Tennyson the situation of Poet Laureate. He is utterly ruined by that Doctor Allen of whom you have heard; there is no man who would do greater credit to the nominator (whoever he may be) than he. The name of Lord Francis Egerton has been mentioned to me as that of a person likely to have influence in this case. Do you think (if this be so) that you could promote Tennyson's good fortune? I am sure that you *will* if you can.

I rather think that *Lord De la Warr* has the appointment. With best compliments to Mr. Butler, believe me to be, Dear Mrs. Butler,—Your very sincere,

B. W. Procter.

18 Belgrave Square, London.

My dear Mrs. Butler,—I do not at *this moment* so much as know who advises the Crown as to the appointment of Laureate, but I hope to make out at the House of Commons,

and whoever does shall be besieged in form without delay. Under the circumstances you mention to Lady F. I shall be very miserable if Mr. Tennyson fails in obtaining a post, which will receive by his acceptance more honour than it can give.—I remain, my dear Mrs. Butler, yours faithfully,

F. EGERTON.

MRS. BUTLER,
26 Upper Grosvenor Street.

18 BELGRAVE SQUARE,
March 31, 1843.

My dear Mrs. Butler,—The enclosed exhibits the result of my communications with the powers that be. I do not know whether Wordsworth has applied or will accept. On the principle of eminence which seems to have been observed *il n'y a rien à redire.* He could have but two other competitors. Of these Rogers is, I presume, out of the field, and Campbell would, I apprehend, be in a respectable minority if it went to division in a committee of the Lord Chamberlain's whole breast. I mentioned to Miss Sullivan a suggestion of Sir Robert Peel's, involving a palliative of Mr. T.'s complaint, which we can talk over when we meet at dinner.—Believe me, very truly yours,

F. EGERTON.

MRS. BUTLER,
26 Upper Grosvenor Street.

GROSVENOR SQUARE,
March 30, 1843.

Dear Lord Francis,—The Laureateship is actually offered to Wordsworth. It only remains for me, therefore, to express my regret that I am unable to comply with your wishes in favour of Mr. Tennyson, whose merits are highly spoken of.—Believe me, my dear Lord, yours most truly,

DE LA WARR.

THE LORD FRANCIS EGERTON.

So Tennyson was not made Laureate, and did not again come to the Lakes till the year 1850, when again the land was Laureateless, the Lake country had lost its poet, and Rydal Mount was without its master. But it is clear that the Lake country had laid claims to his heart. Other friends than the Marshalls of Coniston offered him homes for the honeymoon, but it was to the Cumberland and Westmoreland dales he turned in those first blissful days of happy married life.

He came by Ullswater and Patterdale to Keswick. What he seemed like then I have heard from those who saw him; and have described elsewhere in detail.[1]

He went on thence to Coniston. "We only arrived here last night," he writes to his aunt. "Mr. Marshall's park looked as lovely as the Garden of Eden, as we descended the hill to this place—Tent Lodge. We have a very beautiful view from our drawing-room windows—crag, mountain, woods and lake, which look especially fine as the sun is dropping behind the hills."

There was a possibility that the line of Laureates in the Lake country would not be broken. The Marshalls offered Tent Lodge to the happy lovers as a permanent home—the offer was almost coincident with the offer of the Laureateship which

[1] Cf. *Literary Associations of the English Lakes*, vol. I., p. 172, *et seq.*

came to him on November 5th of the same year (1850). But Tennyson's thoughts turned first to the wolds of Lincolnshire, and then to the South Downs, and he eventually settled at Twickenham.

That autumn stay at Tent Lodge was memorable for the visit of Carlyle and Venables and Aubrey de Vere to the Tennysons there. They then heard a bit of thinking aloud, between infinite puffs of tobacco, which made them feel that they need have no further anxiety about the happiness of the newly married pair. "I have known," so runs the soliloquy, "many women who were excellent, one in one way one in another way, but this woman is the noblest woman I have ever known," and as I hear the words, I go back in thought to the poem at Shiplake Vicarage and to the after-honeymoon verses, written of one in whom, "after the experience of 'more than half a year,' the husband" could not find "half the fraction of a failing."

Once again Tennyson came to the English Lakes. Again he saw the sun drop behind "The Old Man" and gild the Coniston Lake with glory. This was five years later. Then he came with his wife and two children. It was his last visit.

CHAPTER V.

MEMORIES OF FARRINGFORD.

It was not until 1884 that I saw for the first time the poet about whom one had heard all one's life.

In the early spring of that year I found myself passing through an uninteresting little bit of country whose pastoral simplicity was marred by fortress and gunpowder magazine, and the beauty of whose hedgerows of fuchsias and myrtle seemed to be entirely out of keeping with the suburban look of vulgar little villas and roadside houses which, from time to time, disfigured the country lanes.

Freshwater was reached at last, and at a glance one realised the truth of Tennyson's lines:

> "Yonder lies our young sea village—
> Art and Grace are less and less;
> Science grows and Beauty dwindles,
> Roofs of slated hideousness."

But it was good to be at Freshwater, if only to see the long lines of cliff that, "breaking had left a

FARRINGFORD.

chasm," and ere they broke had flung huge masses of themselves to weather into the quaintest forms, the Needles in miniature, there in Freshwater bay. And it was pleasant to think that the poet who loved the coast of Lincolnshire could here in the chasm find "foam and yellow sands."

But where is Farringford? Climb up the Down—the long "ridge of a noble down" to which the poet bade his friend Maurice come—and, as you pass along it toward the Beacon and the Needles at the south-west of the island, you will see beneath you on the landward side a woodland grove, wind-bitten and storm-twisted. Pass through a wicket by the gnarled thorn, and cross a deep lane by a little foot-bridge, and you will find a door marked "Private," which gives access to that "careless-order'd garden" in the midst of whose limes and cedars and elms the poet had found since 1853 sanctuary for his song.

I do not remember ever to have found such seclusion as was here possible. It seemed as if every tree that grew had felt a kind of personal responsibility to keep the intruder out. The very walks in the lime-tree alleys were ungravelled and hushed, and when one came upon the lawn it seemed more velvet soft and mossy silent than woodland lawns are wont to be. As for the house itself, it was so swathed in magnolia and heavy ivy garniture that

it seemed part of the woodland itself, and it was not till one came from under the cedars and caught sight of the glass conservatory that one was sure that here mortal as well as immortal had his dwelling.

Anyone who approaches Farringford by the ordinary park drive will be struck by the absolute simplicity of it all. No pompous gateway, no pretentious lodge—a simple gate, such as might be found at the entrance of any farm in the Midlands. A simple drive up through the meadow, with the big thatched lowly cottages of the Home Farm nestling away under the trees on our right, and then, beyond the ilex and the pines, a simple, unassuming house front, or perhaps, more accurately, house back, with quiet entrance and unpretentious hall.

How well I remember the poet's greeting! "Now come to the light. Whose eyes have you? Ah, I see; a son of your mother,—a Franklin. Well, I've read your sonnets, and I know you like what I like," and saying this he led me up to his den, as he called it, and in a very few moments was reading a bit of work he was busy upon—the making of an epitaph for the De Redcliffe statue in the Abbey.

"I hate doing this kind of thing," he said; "but they bother one out of one's life if one refuses. It is the best way to peace. I never wrote but one that was at all to my mind, and that was to your great-

THE HOME FARM, FARRINGFORD.

uncle, Sir John Franklin," and he recited as he spoke :

"Not here! the white North has thy bones; and thou,
Heroic sailor soul."

He read me three alternatives for the epitaph he was engaged upon, and it was very interesting to hear him speak of the *pros* and *cons* of the word arrangements.

The first began :

"De Redcliffe, now thy long day's work hath ceased,
Stand here among our noblest and our best."

The second was like it, but with a difference of arrangement :

"Stand here, among our noblest and our best,
De Redcliffe, now thy long day's work hath ceased."

And he was in doubt as to whether he should, in the second couplet, write :

"Silent, in this great minster of the West,
Who wast the voice of England in the East."

or,

"Silent, in this great minster of the West,
But once the voice of England in the East."

He was not satisfied—the rhymes of the quatrain were too nearly akin ; but he wished to emphasise the difference between West and East, and he risked the assonance. We had a long talk over the s's, and I was struck with his own self-criticism upon the use of the sibilant. That he felt it too pre-

ponderating in the quatrain is, I think, clear from the fact that, in the final form in which it may be read upon the base of the statue in the Abbey, he has substituted the use of "our" and "wert" for the words "this" and "wast":

> "Thou third great Canning, stand among our best
> And noblest, now thy long day's work hath ceased,
> Here silent, in our minster of the West,
> Who wert the voice of England in the East."

But it was not till a day or two after that one realised how, to his finely trained ear, the sibilant was positive pain.

He had, in the late afternoon, read to me his touching poem dedicated to General Hamley, "The Charge of the Heavy Brigade," and then we wandered out and up to the Down, and the stars were over us before we reached the ridge. The thrushes, singing their hearts out between the sunset and the star time, made music for us all the way, but I could only think of the rhythm and music of the poem he had rehearsed to me.

Next day, as we wandered out again in the morningtide, I recited to him a sonnet which tried to put the effect of that recitation of "The Charge of the Heavy Brigade" upon record. It began:

> "When thrushes sang, between the day and night,
> And you clomb up the Down toward the stars."

He listened, and then said: "No, no; 'When thrushes sang,' that will never do. Thrushes *called*

or *blackbirds* sang, if you like, but can't you hear the hissing of it? Was it not Madame de Stael who said we English folk all hissed like geese and serpents? No, no, let it be, 'When blackbirds called, between the day and night.'"

To return to one's first impression of the poet. I had expected much. I knew the stately presence of his brother Charles and the fine head of his younger brother Arthur, but the Laureate was grander in build, it seemed to me, and more impressive than either.

Nor was it possible not to feel that one was talking to something more than common mortality. The sound of the seer was in his voice. The air of a prophet was round about him. This may seem exaggeration, but there was something about his look that was more than distinction. It seemed as if one was suddenly brought into the presence of one who lived in another world, and could make one feel the atmosphere of other worldliness in which he lived and moved and had his being. I had seen many great men. I had not *felt* one before. The tone of his voice was to my ears fuller than the tone of his brother Charles's, was richer than the full-chested voice of Arthur, but it was not only in tone that his voice struck one. It was in the exquisite nicety of speech which, with all its simpleness, seemed to have just the added subtleties that

you would expect from a man who had spent all his life in word selection and in the phrasing of language with exquisite delicacy.

There was about his face that same foreign look which the old peasants at Somersby had remembered, and of all the softest hands I ever shook his seemed the softest. And last, one noticed just that picturesqueness of attire one had associated with him. The loose collar, the loosely tied cravat, the loosely fitting alpaca coat—all this seeming not careless, but rather with care and thoughtfulness for use and effect.

That evening we dined, and, as was the Farringford wont, passed out of the dining-room to dessert in an adjoining room, where, at a horseshoe mahogany table we sat, with the fire pleasantly burning on the inner side of the curve ; it gave rosy light to the glitter of the glass and fruit, and seemed to add a sense of genial warmth to the pleasantry and wit of the talk that went forward.

I had noted how, through dinner, the poet had been almost silent, but a change came over him, and humour and good sayings and capital stories of old Lincolnshire days, and quaint Lincolnshire sayings, kept the whole table alive. I did not know till that evening what a splendid mimic Tennyson was. He altered his voice from the deep-toned bass of the master of the farm to the shrill treble

and cracked voice of the farmer's dame, and capped story after story with infinite zest. The dialect of his Somersby days was evidently as fresh in his ears as though he had never left the county, and the delight in hearing the old Doric of the land of the northern farmer seemed to warm him up to early reminiscences of the quaint ways and quaint sayings of the country folk amongst whom he had spent his boyhood.

After "the walnuts and the wine" below stairs, came wine of other sort in the great study up aloft. There, bedroom candlestick in hand, and sitting on a plain sort of high-backed kitchen chair—if my memory serves—we heard the poet read not what we chose, though he gave us choice in most courteous manner, but what he would. He read a passage from "Maud," "The Northern Farmer" (old style), "The Spinster's Sweet-Arts," and "The Ode to the Duke of Wellington," and to this day I hear the almost moan as of a far away cathedral organ in his voice, with which he began:

"Bury the Great Duke with an empire's lamentation."

how he lengthened out the vowel *a* in the words "greät" and "lamentätion" till the words seemed as if they had been spelt "greaat" and "lamentaation," and how he rolled out and lengthened the open *o*'s in the words,

"To the nooise of the moourning of a mighty naation";

nor shall I cease to remember the way in which, as he approached the end of the line,

"Warriors carry the warrior's pall,"

one felt as if the whole procession was in a kind of slow trot, or rather one seemed to see that curious up and down motion a great line of men makes on the march.

Nor can I forget how, at the intervals or ends of a phrase, such as,

"And sorrow darkens hamlet and hall,"

the whole voice which had been mourning forth the impassioned lament suddenly seemed to fail for very grief, to collapse, to drop and die away in silence, but so abruptly that the effect upon one was—"He has come to a full stop; he will not read another line."

The next day I went for a morning walk with him upon the Down. As we went through the little wicket gate that let us out from the seclusion of the garden grove into the lane, I noticed that a rogue had written in chalk upon it beneath the word "Private" these other words, "Old Tennyson is a fool." I half hoped the old poet would not see it, but his eye caught sight of it, and he said, in a sort of cheery way, "The boy's about right; we are all of us fools, if we only knew it. We are but at the beginning of wisdom."

We spoke of other poets—of Wordsworth, whom he called, "very great when he is great, but there are long barrennesses in him"; of Browning, of whom he said, "He can conceive of grand dramatic situations, but where's the music"; of Burns, of whom he said glowingly, "Yes, if ever man was inspired, Burns was," and at once he broke into one of Burns's songs, and enjoyed himself vastly.

In answer to the question as to which of all the lines he had written he was proudest of, he said, "I think I am most glad to have written the line,

> 'The mellow ouzle fluted in the elm.'"

"I believe," he added, "I was the first to describe the ouzle's note as a flute note."

"But," said I, "What about

> 'The moan of doves in immemorial elms,
> And murmuring of innumerable bees'"?

"Well," he answered, "I am glad to have written those also."

So on we fared, talking, amongst other things, of Charles Turner's sonnets, and hearing him say, "Yes they are wonderful. I sometimes think that, of their kind, there is nothing equal to them in English poetry." All the while, as we went along, his eyes were on the ground, and he was constantly turning over the leaf of this or that weed and flower with his stick, as if he expected to

find some secret about its life's history hidden away beneath.

Now and again he would push a bit of hedge-row branch with his walking-staff up against the sky that he might see its outline. It seemed a habit, he said nothing, just gazed intently and passed on. Once in sight of the sea, he sang out a passage of Homer, and spoke enthusiastically of the educative power, for the sense of sound, that a good course of Homer gave one; and then we turned for home.

As we came back towards the Home Farm, and were in one of the lanes or roads near by, I saw a char-a-banc of tourists approaching. Lord Tennyson turned his face to the bank and began prodding violently with his stick.

"Are they looking?"

"Yes," said I.

"Let them look then," said the poet, and they did look, but they saw nothing but the broad back of his cape and the flap of his ample wideawake.

"Its horrible the way they stare," he continued when he was released. "And their impudence is beyond words. An American lady walked right up to me on the lawn in front of the house one day and asked, 'If I had seen Mr. Tennyson?' and I said 'Yes.' 'Where was he?' I told her I had seen him, half an hour before, down there,

and she scuttled off like a thing possessed. It was true enough," added the Bard, "for I had been down there half an hour ago. It's horrible; what have I done that I should be thus tormented?"

As we came towards the house, he spoke of his peerage. "I did not want it, what can I do? How can I take off a cocked hat and bow three times in the House of Lords?" he said, "and that is all it amounts to. I don't like this cocked-hat business at all, but Gladstone shewed me that it was an honour not to me so much as to letters, and I learned that the Queen wished it, and that was enough. It would have been disloyal and graceless to refuse it, so I must take off my cocked hat three times, I suppose, and make my bow, but I don't like it."

He spoke of Gladstone—"I love him," he said, "but I hate his politics," and then he spoke of the Queen. I have never heard such full-hearted praise of her as "the wisest Sovereign upon a throne" as I then heard. Such loyalty to her person and affectionate regard for her womanliness, so sincere, so simple, touched me deeply. I did not understand it all, till I read the correspondence between Her Majesty and the Laureate, which was published in the Tennyson Memoir.

He spoke sadly of politics; the time had come when it seemed to him that all were for the

party and none were for the state. He spoke bitterly of France and the poison which he thought was working to infect Europe from Paris. He seemed to see that the day of Armageddon was not so far off as men thought; that there was brewing a terrible storm in which all the forces of evil would be let loose upon the world, and in which the social fabric would be shaken to its foundations. I remember the emphasis with which he said "the storm will break; I shall not live to see it, but you will," and he added, "except the days be shortened, who shall be saved?"

I tried to find out what he really meant by this gloomy foreboding, but he was silent. He added, "I have no doubt the old order will yield place to new, and we shall yet find higher gods than Mammon and materialism. But the storm will come, the battle of Modred in the West will yet be fought."

Each morning of the week I was at Freshwater he would say, "Well, have you done anything?" as if he felt that as he worked every day at his art, all other verse-writers ought to be doing likewise, and then would add, "Let me hear." And as we walked along he would say "That will do," or "I don't like that." The sonnets written then have since appeared—some of them in memory of the poet, in a little volume called "Valete," but I

never look at the ones written at Freshwater, "Farringford," "After the Epilogue to The Charge of the Heavy Brigade," "On Hearing Lord Tennyson read his Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington," without a thought of the kindly criticism, the fatherly tenderness, if I may use the word, with which he would listen, and approve or blame these simple attempts in verse. The thought still stays with me of the humble-heartedness in the innermost, that I seemed to see in that skilled artificer of song. If ever man was, "as the greatest ones only are, in their simplicity sublime," it was Alfred, Lord Tennyson. He talked as if he felt, after fifty years of work at it, that he was only at the beginning of his task. He spoke of the next world as assuredly accomplishing the beginnings of this. And whether he had any presage of death I know not, but as he said, "Farewell," he said "Come again, my time cannot be long."

The next time I saw him was in May of 1889. He had been very ill in 1888—indeed hard at death's door. Rheumatic gout, with some complication, had made recovery slow, but with May his strength came back to him, and he ventured with his son ever tenderly at his side, to accept the offer of Lord Brassey's yacht, and to have a cruise down channel and round the coast. I went with my brother and his pupils, the grand-

children of the poet, to meet him in Southampton Roads.

It was a magnificent May day. The Solent lay smooth as a mirror, the yacht, owing to the light air, was late in coming to her haven, and we sat down by the sunny shore loud with the song of the nightingales in the thickets hard by, and awaited the coming of the Bard.

"We watched the ship from speck to phantom grow,
From phantom to its three fair towers of sail."

As it neared, the level sunset light flashed on its bows and turned the vessel into gold. We rowed towards it, and we saw Tennyson at the bows in his great cape, waving his hat in kindliest manner. He welcomed us aboard. Then, after a little talk about the beauty of the Solent, and the shining woodland to the west, he said, "Come down to the cabin, I want to read a bit of 'Linkishire' to ears that understand."

Down we went, and he read with evident enjoyment the manuscript poem of "Owd Roa." Now and again he paused and said, "Is that a Linkishire word still?" and I remember doubting if the word "wud," for mad, was still in vogue, but he had chapter and verse for it, and had made a pretty full inquiry. He asked if the word "solidly" in the line,

"An' she didn't not solidly mean I wur gawin that waäy to the bad,"

was rightly used in such connexion ; the delightful way in which he rolled out the next line, with all the Lincolnshire singsong in his tone,

"Fur the gell was as howry a trollope as iver traäpes'd i' the squad,"

still remains with me. But the two or three lines which he seemed, at that reading, to most chuckle over were the following :

"And I says, 'If I bëant noäwaäys—not nowadaäys—good fur nowt,
Yit I bëant sich a Nowt of all Nowts, as 'ull hallus do as 'e's bid.'"

And the verse which describes the old dog which was lying, after its gallant rescue of the child, senseless in the barn reek:

"Fur 'e smell'd like a herse a-singein', an' seeamed as blind as a poop,
An' haäfe on 'im bare as a bublin', I couldn't wakken 'im oop."

I remember discussing the spelling of the word "wakken," and much wished it should be spelled "waäken," but I was thinking of the way my father's coachman pronounced it, and he was thinking of the way his father's coachman used to say it, and it remains "wakken" to this day. The other line which he read through twice with real gusto was the couplet describing the crash of the burning barn-roof:

"An I 'eärd the bricks an' the baulks rummle down when the roof gev waäy,
Fur the fire was a-raägin' an' raävin' an' roarin' like judgment daäy."

He laughed heartily as he finished the reading of it, and fell to discussion as to the proper spelling of the word "wersens" in the next couplet. I urged that it should be spelt "hoursens"; but he stuck to his own "wersens," saying he supposed that in fifty years there must have come differences in the dialect, and he wished to put it on record as he remembered it. He told many "Linkishire" stories, he talking in broadest dialect and with delightful humour.

We left when twilight was falling on flood and forest, and the last I saw of him was the fine cloaked figure taking a turn on deck at his favourite time—the coming of the stars.

It was my lot only to see him once again. This was in the Spring of 1890. He had had a bad attack of influenza, but was recovered sufficiently to take short walks, though, as a precaution against any sudden attack of faintness, he never went unaccompanied either by his devoted son or his nurse. What he looked like in that Spring can best be seen by a visit to Trinity, Cambridge. In the hall hangs the fine portrait his dear old friend Watts drew of him in May of that year.

In one of his short walks to his garden seat in the arbour of the garden between the house and the home farm, he spoke of the blindness with which people go through this beautiful world

of ours, neither seeing nor hearing the voices of God that are round about them. "It's a sham this nineteenth century education," he said. "It turns men and women out like machines, and never once makes them open eyes and ears to the beauty of the common world about them." He instanced the way in which an educated woman had questioned him as to what bird it was that said "Maud! Maud! Maud!" in the High Hall Garden when twilight was falling, and asked if it was a blackbird. "Yes," he replied, "a very black bird and a big one too; can't you hear them now, what are those rooks saying overhead?"

He said that he had been asked times out of mind what he meant by those lines in "Maud,"

> "For her feet have touched the meadows,
> And left the daisies rosy."

"Anyone with eyes could surely have known how a lady's dress, brushing across the daisies, tilts their heads and lets us see the rosy under-petals, but there are a greater number of no-eyes than eyes in the world, the more the pity of it."

We then passed on to speak of the line in "In Memoriam,"

> "Flits by the sea-blue bird of March."

"I don't know," he answered, "but I suppose it's the kingfisher; don't they come up from the sea about

that time? I think I remember that used to be so in the Steeping River."

"But," I rejoined, "you, with your accuracy of eye, would not speak of any kingfisher as flitting. A kingfisher shoots by, flashes by, but never flits."

He smiled and said, "Yes, you are right, but then what bird could it have been?"

"Well," I replied, "you alone can know that, but there is a bird that does seem in March to shine blue and blue-green with especial brilliancy, by reason, as I think, of the red contrast that has come into the thorn-bush buds. I have often been astonished at the March brightness of the blue tit, and that bird flits."

"Well," said the old poet, "make it a tit; I daresay it was a tit, but I have quite forgotten, and I know I have told other folk it was a kingfisher."

The next day we were again sitting on a garden seat in the sun, and fell to talking about the fame of a poet, and the mission of a poet.

A poet must teach, but not preach," he said, and woe to the man who leaves behind him a note of evil suggestion. I have in my time heard many pretty things—some I believed, most of them I disbelieved, but to my way of thinking the tenderest and best praise that has come to cheer me in my old age is a message from a young girl who sent it timidly by the lips of a friend.

'Tell him,' she said, 'that I read his poems and always rise determined to be better, and feeling wiser than I was.' I should wish to go down to posterity, as Wordsworth will go down to it, as a poet who uttered nothing base."

Struck by the thought of that young girl's message, I put it into simple sonnet form and read it the next day, and he said, "Yes, that's true, and that young girl's words deserved a sonnet."[1]

We continued our talk, on the garden seat, and he said, "The worst of folk is that they are so unable to understand the poet's mind. I describe something which is the result of the impression of a hundred sights and scenes woven into one, and first one localises it here and then another localises it there, and they pin me down to this spot and this meaning, till they make me almost sorry I had written at all. I don't know of how many moated granges it has been asserted that I had it, and it alone, in mind when I wrote 'Mariana.' But," he added, "there's a worse lack of insight than this—people who criticise me seem to be lacking in a sense of humour, and you know," he added, "a man without humour is a fool. Some of the best things I have written are those Lincolnshire sketches, 'The Northern Farmer,' but it needs humour to understand them."

[1] Cf. "Death and Fame," *Valete*, p. 25.

Next day we walked to the Briary. It was, he said, the furthest walk he had taken for some time; as we went he spoke of the certainty of life beyond, and quoted a verse from his "Crossing the Bar."

His son has told us that his father had the thought of that poem given to him one day when he crossed the Solent from Lymm to Yar, but the working out of it must have taken place in the walk between the Briary and Farringford, for he said, after finishing the quotation, "I wrote that between here and home in a single walk," and he turned to the nurse who was with us and said, "Did I not, nurse?"

She replied, "I know it was written down when you got home from your walk."

It did not seem strange that it should have been so swiftly composed. It reads so simply and inevitably that one can well believe it was written right off; so I said, "Yes, but then you had been thinking over it for years."

And he answered, "Well, I suppose the most of us think a good deal, do we not, of the time when we shall put out to sea."

One thing I noted in that walk was the poet's evident sensibility, almost hypersensibility to criticism. He spoke of certain things that had been said of him by men long since dead, and the

bitterness of the criticism remained with him. He said of one man whom, I knew, he loved and honoured dearly, "I wish he had never spoken of my 'Battle of Brunanburg' as reminding him of the 'House that Jack built!'" It was clear that the wit, whether it was deep or shallow, that had, in any way, seemed to him to have criticised ungently, vexed his poet's mind beyond what one would have thought at his age was likely. He ended the talk by saying,

> "In my youth the growls!
> In mine age the owls!
> After death the ghouls!"

That evening Lord Tennyson was in his best humour. The talk was brilliant and the good stories never ending. I told him the story of how my father's churchwarden greeted me on my return from ordination, and gave me a bit of his mind as to how to proceed to episcopal honours. He was delighted, and said, "Give me that and I will make something of it."

It is perhaps worth while to repeat it, for it will show how inimitably the tale is worked up as it were into poetic form from the rough. I jotted it down for him that evening. It must have been written soon after, for I find a note in his son Hallam's diary, published in the Life of his father, under date June 23rd: "Aldworth. Walked

on the Common. My father is working at his Lincolnshire poem 'The Churchwarden,' and laughed heartily at the humorous passages as he made them."

The story, then, in the rough, before it went to the singer's anvil is as follows: "I returned to my father's parish, Halton Holegate, near Spilsby, in Lincolnshire, from my ordination, and found my father's churchwarden, G. R., upon the platform. He saw I had a white tie on, and he said cheerily, 'Well, Mr. Rownsley, I can seä by that white thing round youre throat that they've gone and maäde a parson on you!'"

"Well, well," he added, "God Omighty knows theer mun beä parsons as well as farmers, and you'd be a fool i' the crewyard along o' the beästs, I reckon, and I should mebbe beä as big a fool in the pulpit o' Sunday. Now, doänt be stunt, I'm youre feyther's churchwarden, and I'm goäin' to giv' you a bit o' my moind."

I assured him that so far from my being stunt, I should take it as a compliment; and he continued, "Theers no daub about you, I know (he meant, I think, no sham). Thou'lt be maäin and plaäin and straäight, I know, but, hooiver, tek my advice, doänt thou saäy nowt to noabody for a year or more, but crip and crawl and git along under the hedge bottoms for a bit, and they'll maäke a bishop on ye yit."

The same evening I told him the story of the farmer in the fenside whose cows took bad ways, and who blamed a great "Baptist dipping" which had taken place in the pond where the cows came to drink. The farmer had waxed quite furious as he told my father of his loss, and said, "The poor thing was bound to die, dal it, I blaäm them howry owd Baptisses for it all, coomin' and pizening my pond by leavin' their nasty owd sins behint 'em. It's nowt nobbut their dippin' as did it, we may be very sartain sewer."

I can hear the laughter, deep-chested, hearty, full-breathed laughter of the poet as he heard that "Linkishire" story, and readers of the "Churchwarden and Curate" will remember how he treated it, how it rings up twice, and how the last two lines of the poem run:

"Fur they've bin a-preächin' meä down, they heve, an' I haätes 'em now,
Fur they leäved their nasty sins i' my pond, an' it poison'd the cow."

I left Farringford with the feeling that here was a man close on his 80th birthday with his eye undimmed and his natural powers unabated, and I felt that, humanly speaking, we might still expect much music from him, to the helping of the nation. On the 13th of the month following,

he would keep his fortieth wedding day with her whose fancy was

"as summer new
As the green of the bracken amid the gloom of the heather"

that was still dark on the top of that Aldworth Down, where he walked and wrote his last poem in the dialect he had learned as a boy, and loved to hear talked to the last days of his life.

There were two other memories that remain with me, ineffaceable, of that last visit; one the tender devotion of man to wife and wife to man. "She has been my life-long and truest critic," he said, speaking of Lady Tennyson; and the other, the more than manly, the womanly care, in the best sense of the word, of the constantly and continuously watchful son for his father, the poet; we who honour Lord Tennyson's work as a national possession can never be sufficiently thankful for the long years of unselfish devotion bestowed by Hallam on the guardianship of his father's health and happiness and working hours.

I never saw the Laureate again, but on his eightieth birthday, August 6, 1889, sent him a little sonnet.[1] He wrote in reply the following letter, which tells in the postscript a picturesque little story, which takes us back to the *Arabian Nights*, and is worth reproducing:

1 Cf. *Valete*, p. 20—"To Lord Tennyson, on his 80th Birthday."

From Painting by G. F. Watts.

LADY TENNYSON.

ALDWORTH, HASLEMERE,
SURREY, Aug., '89.

My dear Hardwicke,--I thank you for your sonnet. It is one of your best, but it somewhat abashed me, for I am or feel myself over praised.—Ever yours,

TENNYSON.

P.S.—Sir Andrew Clarke has forbidden me for the present to write letters, but he told me yesterday an anecdote about himself and the Shah which sounds like a bit of the *Arabian Nights*, and which I must violate his order to tell you. The Shah had much wished to see the Hakim, the great English physician, and sent for him; but Clarke, who had promised me that he would come down to Aldworth on that day, neglected to meet the king of kings; whereat the king of kings was infinitely wroth, and, as C. said, "If I had been one of his Persian subjects, in Persia, would like enough have cut off my head!" But when H.M. learnt that the Hakim had gone down into the country to look after the health of his old friend the poet, he made him one of the great Persian Order of the Lion and the Sword.

I sent back a few days later this quaint anecdote in a sonnet, entitled, "A Story from the *Arabian Nights*," and found that the old poet was not a little troubled that he had, by inadvertence, miscalled the order—the order was the Lion and the Sun—for he knew the difficulties of sonnet rhyme, and saw that for correctness the whole of the last six lines would probably have to be recast. But the demand for accuracy of detail, and the thoughtfulness which urged him to send me word of the inaccuracy, through Lady Tennyson, were

worth spoiling a good many sonnets for to get a glimpse of, and one realised thus how true was the bond of sympathy for the humblest craftsman in his art, which the Laureate kept unbroken until the end.

CHAPTER VI.

REMINISCENCES.

[This chapter was written by my brother Willingham Franklin Rawnsley.]

THERE have at all ages of the world been a few men whom it was a simple delight for a cultivated man to be with, to walk with, talk with, or sit with and listen to; men who had nothing pompous about them, but were full of information and humour, and who had read widely and were blessed with retentive memories; and who, living on beyond the usual span of human life, could travel in personal reminiscences over a long period. What a pleasure it must have been to listen to Socrates, to walk in the fields with Virgil, to sit in a shady garden-nook with Macaenas; or, again, to attend a rehearsal at the Globe Theatre with Shakespeare, or to drop in for an evening at the "Mermaid" Tavern!

In our own time I don't think it can have been given to anybody to be able to make so lasting an impression on those who conversed with them as it was to Gladstone and Tennyson.

Perhaps of all the men of recent years, Mr. Gladstone had the fullest powers as a talker. There was apparently no subject on which he did not know more than the ordinary man, few on which he had not got special and intimate knowledge. I have heard people who have travelled with him say, that when a man introduced his special subject, feeling that he would be able to give possibly some little information on technical points to his audience, he soon found that Mr. Gladstone knew more of his own subject than he did himself. And, besides this, he had the gift of being able to make his hearer feel that he, too, knew something, and thus he made it easy for anyone he was talking with to converse with him. This seems to me to be the acme of conversational ability. Length of days and singular powers of memory added to his surprising fund of information; and though he did not converse with humour, he was amazingly interesting.

Next to Mr. Gladstone, I should certainly put Tennyson as a talker. He did not always talk in company, but with one or two friends he was unsurpassed. Can I ever forget the brightness of the talk at dinner one evening when Jowett and the President of Magdalen were present in the little dining-room at Farringford? Tennyson, too, had huge stores of information. He had seen and heard much, and always read a

great deal, and he, too, had a most prodigious memory. And he had, what Gladstone had not, a wonderful sense of humour. He was brimful of stories; and, walk with him as often as you might, he always had something new to tell you, while his humorous stories extended over half a century.

There is nothing I look back to with more unalloyed pleasure than my walks and talks with the poet at Farringford and Aldworth, and in the New Forest. And as I had been accustomed to hear him and Lady Tennyson spoken of constantly in our family circle, to which she was related, I was never oppressed by that awe of the great man which so many young men could not help feeling.

My earliest remembrance of him is of his visiting my parents at Shiplake, before 1850, when I was turned out of my little room in order that he might have a place of his own to smoke in. He was then still working on "In Memoriam," and it was in this little room of mine that he wrote the "Hesper Phosphor" canto (No. cxx.). It was one 7th of February, in or about 1850, that Tennyson and my father drove to Reading, and on their return they were quoting some verses to one another with much amusement. Tennyson said to me, "And oh, far worse than all beside, he whipped his Mary till she cried." "What is that?" I asked. "Oh, you'll know to-morrow," was all the answer I could

get; and it puzzled me greatly, for it never occurred to me to remember that to-morrow would be my birthday, when the mystery was explained by my father giving me that delightful book, "The English Struwel-Peter." Not long after this, with my father and mother, I met him at lunch at Mr. C. Weld's rooms in Burlington House, where he asked us a riddle which he had just made: "Who are the greatest women in the world? 'Miss Ouri' (owry is a very common word for dirty, probably only familiar to Lincolnshire people of whom there were several in the room on that occasion), 'The Misses Ippi,' and 'Sara Gossa,' in Spain."

It was at Shiplake that he said to my mother, after reading Matthew Arnold's "Merman," "I should like to have written that." And it was then too that on his casting about, as he often did, for a new subject to write on, my mother, as she herself told me, suggested his enlarging his lovely little fragment, published some years before in "The Tribute," than which she told him he had never written anything better, and which, for he acted on the suggestion, is now imbedded in "Maud." The lines were,

> "Oh that 'twere possible
> After long grief and pain
> To find the arms of my true love
> Round me once again."

I have the whole canto as it then stood, written out at the time for my mother. In some respects he altered it when "Maud" came out in 1855, but it is mainly the same, the last five stanzas being omitted, and stanza 6 and half of 7 added.

When he left Shiplake he left his pipe as a legacy to my mother. It is a curious foreign pipe with rather a small bowl; my youngest sister still possesses it. The whole of "In Memoriam" had been written out more than once, and through my mother the MS. had been sent to her cousin, Emily Sellwood, afterwards the poet's wife, who, in returning it, added the following few words of appreciative criticism:

April 1st.

My dearest Katie,— . . . . . Do you really think I should write a line with the Elegies, that is in a separate note, to say I have returned them? I am almost afraid, but since you say I am to do so I will, only I cannot say what I feel. . . . You and Drummond are among the best and kindest friends I have in the world, and let me not be ungrateful, I have some very good and very kind. The longer I live the more I feel how blessed I am in this way. Now I must say good bye.—Thy loving sister, EMILY.

I thought I would write my note before the others came. Here it is, no beginning nor end, not a note at all, a sort of label only. "Katie told me the poems might be kept until Saturday. I hope I shall not have occasioned any inconvenience by keeping them to the limit of time; and if I have, I must be forgiven, for I cannot willingly part from

what is so precious. The thanks I would say for them and for the faith in me which has trusted them to me must be thought for me, I cannot write them. I have read the poems through and through and through and to me they were and they are ever more and more a spirit monument grand and beautiful, in whose presence I feel admiration and delight, not unmixed with awe. The happiest possible end to this labour of love! But think not its fruits shall so soon perish, for they are life in life, and they shall live, and as years go on be only the more fully known and loved and reverenced for what they are.

So says a true seer. Can anyone guess the name of this seer? After such big words shall I put anything about my own little I?—that I am the happier for having seen these poems and that I hope I shall be the better too.

I cannot enter into things more particularly with him. I only hope he will not be vexed by this apology for a note."

In several letters written to my mother about this time, Emily Sellwood signs herself, "thy loving sister"; they were both nieces of Sir John Franklin, Mrs. Sellwood and Sir Willingham Franklin, my mother's father, being brother and sister, and they had been a great deal together as girls, while the Tennysons and Rawnsleys had been old friends and neighbours for two generations before I was born.

The following letter to my aunt Mary of Raithby was written in 1849:

60 Albany Street,
Regent's Park.

My dear Mary,—I arrived safe in town without smash or collision. I met a friend in the train at Peterborough who

hailed me down to dinner immediately—Professor Lathorn, a Lincolnshire man, and rather a celebrity. I called yesterday on another friend, who, against my better judgment, hailed me down to dinner to meet Edwin Landseer, Macready, and a whole lot of great men. It seems that I cannot escape dinners. I shall be dinnered to death—a very unpoetical way of dying too. I hope yours went off well. I pulled out my watch every now and then and thought of you all "now they are sitting down," etc., and was with you in spirit all the time. I hope Robert E. was not too wicked. Here I am in little lodgings, where, however, I don't think I shall stop long. I stretch out arms of love to you all across the distance—all the Rawnsleys are dear to me, and you, though not an indigenous one, have become a Rawnsley, and I invoke you in the same embrace of the affections, tho' memory has not so much to say about you. Kiss the *beautiful* little Babby for me—she really does look beautiful, mellowed by distance—and carefully investigate the top of Edward's head every morning; there may be turnip tops beginning, but if you take them early they may be eradicated. I assure you I hated going away. "I had more care to stay than will to go," but I was forced. I am frightfully late as it is. I am just going to Moxon and expect to be rowed.

Shower my loves and remembrances and tender regards, etc., etc., etc., etc., on everything and everybody about you, dear Lady of Raithby, and believe me to be neither worse nor better than I am—only, always yours,

A. TENNYSON.

Monday morning.—I showed the arbutus berry to a great editor in these parts. He is a Cockney. What do you think he took it *for*?—a strawberry. I beg leave to say that this blot comes of Sophy's filling my Berry's patent too full contrary to my express wish.

My Uncle "Edward" still lives at Raithby, which is situated about halfway between Halton and

Somersby. He it was who was sitting in Tennyson's room once, when he was burning letters and papers, and he rescued literally out of the fire a lyrical gem, possibly the poem "Break, Break, Break," saying "You must not burn that, that is one of the best things you have written."[1]

But to continue about Shiplake. It was at Shiplake that the poet, described in the Marriage License as "Alfred Tennyson of Lincoln Inn Fields," and his bride, who was put down as "Emily Sarah Sellwood of East Bourne in the county of Sussex," in reality two Lincolnshire people, were married by another Lincolnshire person, my father, Drummond Rawnsley, very quietly on June 13th, 1850.

All that I can remember of the ceremony was walking to the church from the Vicarage close by, with my elder sister Mary, Mrs. Percy Chaplin, each of us adorned with a sprig of syringa which we called orange flower. My sister Margaret, Mrs. D. Arden, though very young, was present, but the second bridesmaid was Jenny Elmhirst, eldest daughter of my aunt "Sophy."

The following letters of Dr. Tennyson, the poet's father, to my grandfather show the kind of intimacy there was between the houses of Somersby and Halton:

[1] *Vide* "Memoir," i. 124.

Tuesday 28th, 1826.

Dear Rawnsley,—In your not having come to see me for so many months when you have little or nothing to do but warm your shins over the fire while I unfortunately am frozen or rather suffocated with Greek and Latin, you deserve that I should take no notice of your letter whatever, but I will comply with your invitation partly to be introduced to the agreeable and clever lady but more especially to have the pleasure of seeing Mrs. Rawnsley, whom, you may rest assured, I value considerably more than I do you. Mrs. T.——— is obliged by your invitation, but the weather is too damp and hazy, Mr. Noah,—so I remain, your patriarchship's neglected servant,

G. C. TENNYSON.

This letter was addressed to the Rev. T. H. Rawnsley, Halton Parsonage. The next was addressed to Halton *Palace*, and runs thus:

SOMERSBY, Monday.

Dear Rawnsley,—We three shall have great pleasure in dining with you to-morrow. We hope, also, that Mr. and Mrs. Clarke and yourselves will favour us with their and your company to dinner during their stay. I like them very much, and shall be very happy to know more of them.—Very truly yours,

G. C. TENNYSON.

P.S.—How the devil do you expect that people are to get up at seven o'clock in the morning to answer your notes? However, I have not kept your Ganymede waiting.

It was not only Dr. Tennyson who took pleasure in visiting my grandmother, a sprightly beauty of her time, but the poet, as a young man, would write quite long letters to her, of which the following are specimens:

January 28, 1838.

My dear Mrs. Rawnsley,— . . . . . I have long been intending to write to you, for I think of you a great deal,

and if I had not a kind of antipathy against taking pen in hand I would write to you oftener; but I am nearly as bad in this way as Werner, who kept an express (horse and man) from his sister at an inn for two months before he could prevail upon himself to write an answer to her, and her letter to him was, nevertheless, on family business of the last importance. But my chief motive in writing to you now is the hope that I may prevail upon you to come and see us as soon as you can. I understood from some of my sisters that Mr. Rawnsley was coming in February to visit his friend Sir Gilbert. Now I trust that you and Sophy will come with him—of course he would not pass without calling, whether alone or not. I was very sorry not to have seen Drummond. I wish he would have dropt me a line a few days before, that I might have stayed at home and been cheered with the sight of a Lincolnshire face; for I must say of Lincolnshire, as Cowper said of England,

"With all thy faults I love thee still."

You hope our change of residence is for the better. The only advantage in it is that one gets up to London oftener. The people are sufficiently hospitable, but it is not in a good old-fashioned way, so as to do one's feelings any good. Large set dinners with stores of venison and champagne are very good things of their kind, but one wants something more; and Mrs. Arabin seems to me the only person about who speaks and acts as an honest and true nature dictates: all else is artificial, frozen, cold, and lifeless.

Now that I have said a good word for Lincolnshire and a bad one for Essex, I hope I have wrought upon your feelings, and that you will come and see us with Mr. Rawnsley. Pray do. You could come at the same time with Miss Walls when she pays her visit to the Arabins, and so have all the inside of the mail to yourselves; for though you were very heroic last summer on the high places of the diligence, I presume that this weather is sufficient to cool any courage down to zero.—Believe me, with love from all to all, always yours,

A. TENNYSON.

Beech Hill, High Beech, Loughton, Essex.

To this letter Mrs. Tennyson, the poet's mother, adds a postscript, though she complains that Alfred has scarcely left her room to do so. The letter is dated in her hand.

The following letter was written earlier, before the family had left Somersby, which they did in 1837:

My dear Mrs. Rawnsley,—I am well aware how much I lose by not joining your party to-day, and it is only myself who have to regret that my state of health and spirits will not permit me that gratification. It would be of no use to come among you with an uncheerful mind—and old remembrances sometimes come most powerfully upon me in the midst of society. I have felt this so often to be the case, that I am unwilling to go out when I feel any tendency to depression of spirits. At the same time, believe me, it is not without considerable uneasiness that I absent myself from a house where I visit with greater pleasure than at any other in the country, if, indeed, I may be said to visit any other.—Believe me, therefore, always yours, A. T.

It is curious to observe how much in his youth and early manhood he suffered from those moods, and it was not till late in life he came to realise what they really proceeded from. It was on April 2nd, 1896, that I was with him at Farringford. Alfred and Charley, eldest sons of Lionel Tennyson, were at school with me in the New Forest. We had taken them down to see their grandfather. As we had tea in the sunny little arbour in the kitchen garden, he said to me, "Dr. Andrew Clarke does not advise saccharine, so I have left it off.

He says he does not know enough about it." Going on to the subject of gout, he said, "My foot was asleep for a year before my last attack, and I asked him if creeping paralysis was coming on, and he said no, it was gout; and now I have no doubt that the fits of melancholy I used to have as a young man, which would come on suddenly—sometimes in a ball-room, in the middle of a dance—were just gout." Continuing, he said: "Port is the best wine, but I must not take it now. You are not a smoker. I have smoked all my life, and now a pipe knocks me over. Young Hyde, the saddler in Louth, gave me one of his strong cigars when I was a boy of fourteen, and I smoked it all, and flung the end into a horse-pond, and I was none the worse; so I was bound to be a smoker." The mention of port calls to my mind how greatly the poet amused my father once, the first time that he ever saw the new house at Aldworth, by decanting a bottle of port for dinner, and putting into the decanter a glass of water, saying to my father: "I do that for two reasons; first, it makes it more wholesome; and secondly, it gives me one glass more." He did everything in a large way. The tobacco-jar by his fireside quite held a gallon, and at his early breakfast, at eight o'clock, he would take his own tea in a bowl, saying, "A teacup is such a niggardly allowance."

But to return to our visit to Farringford.

The poet had been far from well, but we found him better and able to walk out in the garden. He was a little annoyed at something in a book which had lately come out, describing the haunts of the poet, and still more by a critic, "who," he said, "won't allow me any originality, or power of imagination." Subsequently he spoke of the poems to "Lilian" and "Adeline," etc., and declared that none of those early bits were meant for anybody in particular, and that he never described Somersby in any poem but the "Ode to Memory" and "In Memoriam." "The Moated Grange" was in Lincolnshire, but not at Somersby, nor was "The Brook" the Somersby beck; "Flow down cold rivulet" was. We walked towards the kitchen garden, and as we went he said to me, "I wish your father had lived, he was such a pleasant man, such a good talker, and knew his classics. I find now that when I read Virgil, I often can't construe all the words. For instance, *propaginis arcus*."

Speaking of fourteen, he said, "At fourteen or fifteen I wrote a tragedy. I looked at it again the other day, it is really very good some of it. I introduced in it a big clock in hell, with its pendulum going 'Ever-never, Ever-never,' and that was twenty years before I ever heard of Longfellow,

and he has the same idea. There's that line in the 'Progress of Spring,'

'The starling claps his tiny castanets.'

I wrote that line fifty-six years ago under the elms in the sloping field at Somersby, and then four or five years ago I saw the same expression in a novel, but they (the critics) wouldn't believe that. All that volume (Demeter, etc.), except the 'Progress of Spring'—and I only altered two or three words towards the end of that—I wrote just now at nearly eighty years old."

We spoke of the Demeter volume, and he said of "Romney's Remorse," "I don't know whether he did feel it, so I put him under the influence of the opiate, and if you take an opiate without needing it, it acts on your feelings. But I am daily expecting his grandson to write and complain about it. But I have my answer in, See what I say of your grandmother, 'The wife of wives.'"

We spoke of "Owd Roä," which he had read to my wife and myself before it was published, and had asked me, just as formerly he used to ask my father, as a Lincolnshire man and one who could talk the dialect (alas! now less and less known and talked), how two or three words should be pronounced. When he asked you a question of that kind, he took careful note of

your answer. Of this I had a striking example, when, on a previous occasion, I had come to see him, and his first words to me were, "You were right about that word." I did not at first remember what the word was, as it had been some nine months since we had discussed it, and he added, "It should be 'tonups,' not 'turmuts.'" Now again he said to me, "I think you are right about the pronunciation of 'greät,' not 'graät.' I see it is put down somewhere as 'greët.' When I first wrote 'The Northern Farmer,' I sent it to a solicitor of ours in Lincolnshire. I was afraid I had forgotten the tongue, and he altered all my Mid Lincolnshire into North Lincolnshire, and I had to put it all back. You see I was modest about my Lincolnshire and called it the 'Northern,' not the 'Lincolnshire Farmer.' Do they say 'nether or 'neyther'? That's your carriage," he added, "good bye, come and see me again," and so I left him.

But to return to my boyhood's reminiscences. We knew it was difficult to obtain Tennyson's autograph, and when I was a boy at school I heard that the poet was spending a day or two at Shiplake, so I sent my copy of the "Idylls of the King"—which was given me as a repetition prize by Edward Thring at Uppingham—home for him to write my name in it, but the letter to explain this I did not send till the

next day. They wondered why the book had come, and the poet said it was very nicely bound, but he left before my letter arrived. However, he wrote my name on a bit of paper, and added his own signature and the date, Christmas, 1861, and sent it to Shiplake for me. He was very chary of writing autographs, and people were quite unblushing in the way they wrote and asked him for them, although perfect strangers to him. He sent my father once a half sheet of notepaper with several of his autographs, adding only one line—"There, will that do for you?" Except in his earlier days, his letters were usually short.

When he came in 1888 to the New Forest to meet Miss Mary Anderson, and the party all came up one morning to our house at Park Hill, we asked him to write our names in the large single volume of his works which he had given us as a wedding present. He at first made as though he would refuse, and before he took the book in his hand to write "To Willingham and Alice Rawnsley, on their marriage, from A. Tennyson," said, "People would say you had decoyed me here on purpose."

In August, 1889, when he was recovering from an illness, I sat in the house with him at Aldworth, and he asked me to read the printed MS. of the Lincolnshire poem, "Owd Roä," finished in 1887, but still open to correction.

In 1890 he sent me the Demeter volume, much of which he had previously read to me in MS., with the following inscription in it: "W. Rawnsley, from Tennyson." And written on the same leaf with his own hand: "Errata. In poem 'To Mary Boyle,' first page, read 'our cuckoo' for 'one.' In 'Romney's Remorse' read (p. 150, ninth line from top) 'Than all' for 'More than all'—a most stupid misprint which spoils the metre."

It must be admitted that that volume is a wonderful achievement. Nothing in the language can surpass the little poem at the end, "Crossing the Bar." And the poet was eighty when he wrote it. Nearly thirty years before he had once said in my hearing: "A poet's work should be finished by the time he is sixty. Anything I write must be in the next ten years!" I instanced Sophocles, whose finest play was composed when he was seventy. Readers will agree that Tennyson wrote some of his finest things after he was sixty.

On March 26, 1890, I met the Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, at Winchester station, and as we travelled towards the Forest he gave me his elegant Latin rendering of "Crossing the Bar." But he was uncertain about the meaning of the lines:

> "When that which drew from out the boundless deep
> Turns again home."

He had translated them :

> "Ex infinito cum vita exorta profundo
> Divinam repetit, prodiit unde domum."

But having done so, he asked me whether I thought the poet intended to refer to the soul or to the wave. I said to the wave certainly, to the soul possibly. He said it had struck him that it might be so, and he gave me an alternative rendering :

> "Ex infinito veluti cum nata profundo
> Sistit et in proprium vertitur unda domum."

A week later I asked the poet at Farringford which he intended, and he answered that he meant both the wave and the soul.

We may compare, of course, the lines :

> "Out of the deep, my child, out of the deep"

and

> "From the great deep to the great deep he goes."

Once at Farringford in 1888 he asked Mr. Gordon Wordsworth, who was working then with me, how old his grandfather was when he died ; and on being told that he was eighty, he said, rather sadly, "One more year."

The object of his visit in that year to the New Forest was to meet Mary Anderson, and talk with her about the production of his play, "The Foresters," on the stage. For two days we drove about the Forest. The weather was perfect, and

we lunched in chosen spots, sitting in the fern, visiting "Mark Ash" and "The Queen's Bower," where we went specially to see some beautiful beeches, one of which Mary Anderson, who was full of brightness and delight in the beauty of the Forest, claimed as hers, whilst the poet more admired another close by, which had a bigger girth, and was, he said, the finer tree; and ever since we have always called them the "Tennyson" and "Anderson" beeches. I did not at this time know of one which is still grander than either, and for which the poet enquired of me. But I found it afterwards, having got the man to come and point it out who had, some thirty years ago or more, driven the poet on several occasions from Brockenhurst, and waited for him all day whilst he walked about or lay at the foot of this magnificent tree making his "Idylls of the King."

We spent a morning at Lyndhurst, in the beautiful gardens of Colonel Macleay, which the poet described as "a perfect paradise"; and in the evening Mr. Gordon Wordsworth and I joined the family circle in their Lyndhurst lodgings, and spent an evening which we are never likely to forget. In the Forest, Tennyson looked for and pointed out the greenish silvery light which flickers on the fern when the sun is ahead of the spectator. He said he had described that in the "Idylls," and *The Spectator*, I think it

was, said that such a thing was impossible. "*But I saw it.* I was lying," he said, "on a knoll in the Forest under a beech, with hollies growing round, and I described just what I then saw." The lines are in "Pelleas and Ettarre":

> "Riding at noon, a day or twain before,
> Across the Forest call'd of Dean, to find
> Caerleon and the King, had felt the sun
> Beat like a strong knight on his helm, and reel'd
> Almost to falling from his horse; but saw
> Near him a mound of even-sloping side,
> Whereon a hundred stately beeches grew,
> And here and there great hollies under them;
> But for a mile all round was open space,
> And fern and heath: and slowly Pelleas drew
> To that dim day, then binding his good horse
> To a tree, cast himself down; and as he lay
> At random looking over the brown earth
> Thro' that green-glooming twilight of the grove,
> It seem'd to Pelleas that the fern without
> Burnt *as a living fire of emeralds*,
> So that his eyes were dazzled looking at it."

This green light is only reflected from the fern when full grown, and when the surface is hard and shiny.

He was always very sensitive to the remarks of the critics, whether they attacked his powers of observation or denied him any originality. One especially annoyed him by suggesting sources from which he had copied or borrowed similes and expressions, often mentioning writers whom Tennyson declared that he had never read or heard of, and

quite ignoring the fact that the same thought can strike various people at different times, and that it is not necessary to hunt for the source of all that a poet gives us, if only we will allow that poet some power of imagination of his own.

"They allow me nothing," he once said to me. "For instance, 'The deep moans round with many voices.' 'The deep,' Byron; 'moans,' Horace; 'many voices,' Homer; and so on."

I once ventured to ask where he got the metre of "The Charge of the Light Brigade," a metre of which I only knew one other instance, in Drayton's "Battle of Agincourt." He said he did not take it from that, but the *Times*, in giving the account, said "Some one had blundered." He said he kept saying that to himself, and the words kept on sounding in his head, and made the metre of the poem; and, indeed, as it was first printed, the line occurs twice: "For up came an order which someone had blundered" being afterwards omitted.

He would in the course of an hour's walk on the downs at Farringford talk on an endless variety of topics, telling me the most humorous stories of my grandfather and the old Somersby days, and other good things that his friend Ward had told him, asking for Lincolnshire stories and telling them himself with faultless dialect. His command of the dialect after so many years'

absence from Lincolnshire was very wonderful. In three or four of his poems he incorporated stories which originated in or near my father's parish of Halton, but the "Spinster's Sweet-Arts," which is as racy as anything ever written, was entirely spun out of his own brain. I once read this at a "penny reading" in Farringford, and next morning the poet said, "You gave me a bad night last night." When I wondered how, he said, "The two housemaids sleep over my head, and they were laughing all night over the "Spinster's Sweet-Arts." I think he excused both them and me.

In our walk afterwards he spoke of some of the English poets, and remarked on the great beauty of Keats, and the extraordinary facility of Byron, who had been too hastily thrust aside by the majority of English readers, but he thought that he would come to the front again. Wordsworth, whom he greatly admired, he thought "would have been greater if he had written less." Of Browning, he said, as though speaking with great diffidence, "I cannot help thinking that there ought to be some melody in poetry, it should not be all thought." But I think I never heard him speak with greater enthusiasm of any modern poet than he did of Burns. We were walking once on the moor at Aldworth, and he sat down

on the heather at the side of a deep cart-track, and in magnificent tones spoke the lines:

"Go fetch to me a pint o' wine,
An' fill it in a silver tassie;
That I may drink before I go
A service to my bonnie lassie.
The boat rocks at the pier o' Leith;
Fu' loud the wind blaws frae the ferry;
The ship rides by the Berwick-Law,
And I maun leave my bonnie Mary.

"The trumpets sound, the banners fly,
The glittering spears are ranked ready,
The shouts o' war are heard afar,
The battle closes thick and bloody;
But it's no the roar o' sea or shore
Wad make me langer wish to tarry;
Nor shout o' war that's heard afar;
It's leaving thee, my bonnie Mary."

The grand way in which he rolled out the line

"The battle closes thick and bloody,"

was worth anything to hear. We spoke of the sonnet. He praised some of Shakespeare's, Milton's, and Wordsworth's very highly, and added, "I have written a few; I think 'Montenegro' is a good one." From this we passed to translations, of which he used to say that the benefit lay with the translator. Of Worsley's translation of the "Odyssey" he said that by the Spenserian stanza a poet was so fettered and constrained that it made it exceedingly difficult. His own few bits of Homeric translation are so good that it was

not unfrequently suggested to him to translate the whole "Iliad" or "Odyssey," but he did not think it a poet's task, although perhaps none but a poet could do it. The pronunciation of Homer we had several talks about. He always maintained that the Greeks themselves never heard the full significance of Homer, the sound of which was only heard at its best when rendered by a northern tongue; and after rolling out a few lines in his own unapproachable manner, he would add, "The Greeks never *poluphloisboied*, they *poluphleesbeed*." Sappho he was extremely fond of, and quoted the beautiful line about the apple on the topmost bough,

"ἀκροτατῶ ἔπι δενδρῶ."

Virgil he loved, especially Book VI. and the last part of "Georgic II.," and Catullus, the sweet singer. What can be more beautiful than his own lines to Virgil, written in a charming metre of his own:

"Wielder of the stateliest measure
Ever moulded by the lips of man."

Of English hexameters for serious work he had no opinion. Walking along the terrace of Aldworth with its splendid view, and talking of English hexameters, he rolled out three or four lines, beginning:

"Aldworth that stands on the height o'erlooking the woods and the champain,"

continuing "I could go on for ever like that, but what is its worth?"

Perhaps not much; but it was worth a good deal to hear him declaim them. He addresses Milton in those remarkable experiments in metre, as

"O mighty mouthed inventor of harmonies"

and

"God-gifted organ voice of England."

And certainly I never heard any sounds of the human voice so magnificent as the reading by the poet of "Maud" and "Boadicea." The long lines were rolled out in rhythmic beats, and the tones involuntarily brought up to one's mind the line,

"And let the bass of Heaven's deep organ blow.'

Once at Farringford, when the Dean of Westminster was staying with him, and I had come over from the New Forest for the day; after the poet had already had a good long walk, of which the Dean said to me, "He walks me quite off my legs," Edison's present of a phonograph was got out, and the poet at the Dean's suggestion spoke some of his own well-known lines into the machine, after which we sat side by side on the little sofa with the conductors in our ears, and heard the grand voice come back from the cylinder: an experience never to be forgotten.

His powers of walking up to almost the last

were quite wonderful, and his raven locks gave no signs of his age. Once, soon after the publication of "Locksley Hall; Sixty Years After," I found him rather angry at the critics having taken the old man who speaks in the poem as intended for a picture of himself. "I 'this old white-headed dreamer,' as if I should call myself that! I that have not a white hair in my head!"

I have said that he spared no pains to avoid even the slightest error, and the immense care that he took in polishing and repolishing every verse until he was satisfied with it is common knowledge. Once at Aldworth I saw him walking about the room with an etui-case of Lady Tennyson's in his hand, in which was set a fine piece of the stone called avanturine, so called from its likeness to the Venetian glass, which is brown and full of golden specks, and which, having been first discovered *a ventura* by the chance of some brass filings having fallen into molten glass, was called avanturine. He showed it to us and said, "Look at it, see the stars in it, worlds within worlds." He was quite bent on making a simile from it for use in the poem he was writing; and later in the evening, he came downstairs and read aloud the two lines which he then had got in three different ways; one verse was:

"Shone gem or jewel in their dewy hair,"

or,

"Then glanced
Or dew or jewel from their golden hair,"

or,

"Or gem or jewel sparkled in their hair
Like stars within the stone Avanturine."

But when the poem came out ("Gareth and Lynette") it was found to read:

"And the hair
All over glanced with dewdrop or with gem
Like sparkles in the stone Avanturine."

Both words, lines, and portions of lines were often changed in the course of construction. For instance, my wife and I were at Farringford just after the death of the Duke of Clarence in January, 1892; and the poet was kind enough to read us the seven lines he had then composed in memory of that sad event. He did not seem satisfied with them, excellent as they were; he always found a difficulty in doing what he called poems to order, but when they were published he had added four at the beginning and six more at the end. In the same way "Maud" was built, as it were from the centre outwards.

His carefulness in choosing his words made him sensitive to the wrong use of words, or the use of wrong words even in conversation; and once when I was walking with him, he pulled me up sharply

for using the word "awful." "You have used that word twice this morning; I can't bear it." I said, "I know I have, and I hate the slang use of it; but each time I used it to-day was in its legitimate sense was it not?" He gave a doubtful assent, but I was very sorry I had used it. Once later he corrected me. It was at Aldworth. He was looking for a letter which Browning had written him on his last volume, speaking in high praise of it, and the genuine kindness of the letter had moved Tennyson greatly. We turned over two or three drawers of letters as we sat side by side on the sofa in his room upstairs. He spoke of the time when Mr. Gladstone had offered him the peerage and how he took it as a tribute to letters, caring himself nothing for all the peerages in the world; which was no more than true; there never was the slightest suspicion in his manner that being made a peer had altered him in the very least degree. He was if possible simpler in his views and ways afterwards than before, and straightforward simplicity was his strong characteristic. He commended it once to me as the thing he liked so much in my grandfather; and in a man of his own great position and powers it seemed always most noticeable.

But to return. We were looking for Browning's letter, and I used the word "knowledge," pronouncing

it as a rhyme to "college." He looked at me and said, "Knōwledge, I say." I said, "Do you say acknōwledge too?" He thought a moment and then said, "Yes, I do," and there can be no doubt that he was quite right. Though we did not find the letter, he told me the substance of it, and called it a very kind and friendly letter. But our search led to a most interesting talk; and how interesting his talk could be, only those who had the privilege of knowing him well can realise.

Once when I drove from Winchester to Haslemere with my wife, we walked up to Aldworth in the morning and found the poet ready for a walk on Blackdown, and for a couple of hours he walked and talked on every variety of topic with a life and brightness and humour which we can never forget. He complimented my wife on her costume, because she had not fallen a victim to the horrible custom then in vogue of wearing what was called a "dress improver," or, as he called it in his straightforward manner, a "bustle."

This led him to speak of dress, and he told us that he had lately had a visit from a friend of his who had been in office, I think, in some Pacific Isles, where the rarest apology for dress was all that was needed or worn. But the head man of the place had imbibed some European notions and insisted on his wife going to call on the

White Chief in a European dress. He said that she came to him positively blushing at what seemed to her the immodesty of her costume, and she apologised to him for appearing before him in clothes. She would have come *in puris naturalibus* without *gêne*. "It is clothes," said Tennyson, "that make the immodesty, not the want of them. There is nothing immodest in your natural skin."

The last time I saw him, in the summer of 1892, the last year of his life, he was sitting on one of the green secluded lawns at Aldworth. Mrs. Allingham was sitting with us, to whom he paid a very prettily turned compliment on her beautiful water-colour pictures, for though he was called brusque, sometimes he could say very pretty things, and he valued them too. For instance, he told me once how when he went to see the Queen, and she had received him and put him at his ease at once, making him sit down beside her, with the words, "You and I, Mr. Tennyson, are old people, and like to sit down"; he went on to speak with some despair of the irreligion and socialism which seemed to pervade everything, and how the Queen in the prettiest way had said to him in answer,

> "Oh yet we trust that somehow good
> Will be the final goal of ill";

and he added, "I thought that very pretty to quote my own words in answer to me."

But it is time I stopped these rambling reminiscences. It is to me a pleasure to recall the faces of distinguished people I have met at his house, but most of all to remember his own marked features and grand head. It has been called a "Rembrandt-like dome," and the poet himself once told me that the greatest compliment he ever had paid him was by two working men, masons, he thought, who passed him in a street, and he heard one say to the other, "There goes a Shakespeare-like fellow!"

Nor can I ever forget the pleasant talks with his son Hallam, kindest and best of sons and most unselfish of men, nor the sweet charm of the poet's wife, always interesting, always full of affectionate kindness and wonderful feeling and good sense, a visit to whom lifted one up out of the ruts of this world on to a higher platform altogether. One felt that to her most fitly of all living people could Spenser's lines be applied:

> "Whose sweet aspect both God and man doth move
> In her unspotted pleasaunce to delight."

Alas! my last visit to Farringford was with one of my brothers to see her laid to rest in the churchyard there.

CHAPTER VII.

FROM ALDWORTH TO THE ABBEY.

THE mist lay still upon the surly, sombre Thames on Tuesday, October 11th, 1892, but the vane upon the clock tower at Westminster glittered in the sun as we turned our backs upon the Confessor's Sanctuary. There, last night, had sounded the hammer and pick of those who were hollowing out, from the solid twelve feet concrete floor of Poets' Corner, the quiet perdurable chamber for the Laureate's long sleep. There, to-night, in the silence of some old chapel of St. Faith, should the Poet's body rest, and await its burial on the morrow.

Soon we were speeding through "happy Autumn fields," still gleaming from the harvest, and pine-groves dark upon their yellow sandy beds; by villages and village homes, shining in the sun—the dahlias in cottage gardens apparently untouched by frost,—the hollyhocks undimmed; over heaths red-brown, through larch-plantations where the bracken was just beginning to turn, by meres and moorland pools unruffled of wind, by quiet orchards lately

garnered, and peaceful farms ranged round with new built stacks, on towards the Surrey hills and Sussex glades, that were darkened and hushed to-day with a great and solemn hush, for the Poet-lord of England, their singer and their lover, lay dead.

The train roared on past Guildford, rattled over the sounding bridges of the Wey and Arundel Canal, dived through the Hogs-back Hill, slipped light-heartedly by the birches and willows of Godalming, and under pine-clad Witley heights, and drew up cheerily enough at the Haslemere Station. But there were hearts that were very heavy that left that train, and men who lifted from it a burden which made those hearts the heavier.

For, as one turned away from the platform, one was aware of a dark group of men raising into a carriage a plain unpolished coffin, without ornament save for the simple plate that bore in plainest lettering the birth and death dates of Alfred, Lord Tennyson.

Heart of oak as the poet had been in his love and devotion to his native land, in heart of oak should his ashes lie enclosed, even as in life among the oak groves he had kept himself close; and simplest and sincerest of hearts in life, in death should he be surrounded only by the simple and sincere—a man who had, all his days, disdained personal ornament, had moved about in homeliest

guise, had hated all veneer; in his last sleep he should lie in such plain garniture, as this unvarnished and unadorned dress of oaken growth should be. But, for those who saw the coffin borne from the train on that bright October morning, the sun faded, and the first great shock of death came near and clear. The very simplicity of the messenger seemed to add directness to the message.

There was no sandstone rock at hand, whereon to go and grave the words of doom, but in the dust whereof our feeling hearts were made, these words were then and there written—"Tennyson is dead."

We turned away dumb for sorrow, and stumbled out of the little station, fragrant from the scent of wreaths and floral offerings inside their thin woody cases, that waited conveyance to Aldworth or to the Abbey. Rooks went over head, crying, as it seemed sadly enough, "Maud! Maud! Maud!" but for aught else all was voiceless. The children of the village gazed at the carriage that took its dark burden slowly up the hill, and whispered; we met foot-passengers upon the high-banked pavement that leads toward the village town, but no one spoke; people leaned at their doors in the village street in silence; a great calmness had fallen upon the village-square, a kind of sense of "all is over and done" pervaded the air.

But the sun shone, and the heavens became divinely blue, and the pear-tree gathered gold upon the wall, the red virginia creeper grew rosier, and as one neared the end of the village I heard a hodman singing at his work. One almost felt that song and work should have ceased from out of the land on such a day, and yet, within the song of the worker, there was a kind of sturdy defiance for that Dark Breaker of the mortal house of clay; and as the builders builded I heard a voice saying within me, "Every moment dies a man, every moment one is born! Then wherefore should we grieve?"—And I found myself answering my own thought and saying—"I grieve because one of the noblest houses of mortal clay is broken down at the last, and because the soul of him, the immortal, who, by his song, has lifted up and made glorious both palaces of art and humble cottage homes, wherein the hearts of men shall dwell in gladness for generations yet to be, has passed to that other house, not made with hands, and has left his home upon the Surrey hills for ever and for ever."

So, forth towards that Surrey home we fared. Hindhead rose up red and brown to the north-west glowing still; as if the glory of heather bloom had not quite passed away. From the near ridges of the woody hills of Hambleden Hascombe and

Pain's Hill, happy dwellings of men laughed in the rich October light; white-faced halls and rosy roof-trees gleamed and glittered over park and meadow and bowery orchard ground, across the gentle vale. Beyond, to the northward, the blue of the Hogsback and Dorking Ridge as far as Leith Hill mixed and melted in the blue of heaven; and a flood of vaporous woodland stretched out to east and south, and rolled in mystery of light and shade to an opal distance.

Slowly we rose up the "Haste Hill," as it is called, and scented there the autumnal odour breathed from the birch and oak that had felt a first night's frost. By rosy farm, new built upon the rough ground to our right—by ancient manor hall, dimly seen and tree-encircled, in the Lythe Hill hollow to our left, we passed, and could not but remember how, never again within that spacious park, on such a day as the poet had described in his "Princess," would the people throng and gaze upon him, the goodliest poet of the time, as he moved from flower to flower; scenting the fragrance of this, gazing closely with almost microscopic eye at that, and asking questions of those about him as to the name or the nature of this or that new blossom. For every year may bring to that park and its genial owners, a crowd of

flower-show folk, but the venerable figure that gave it such rare interest, our English Lord of Song, will not be seen.

The gate of the hazel-bowered, holly-lined lane was passed: and through its long oaken avenue of chequered sun and shadow we went. An acorn fell here, a squirrel flashed there, and as we paused at a gate, to gaze over the plain that broadens to the East, a robin sang out loud—one felt then that silence was better than song, we were hurt at the careless content within the wild-bird's heart; but, as he sang, something from the sunny plain beneath, and the blue heaven above, and the autumn-fragrant lane, mingled with the song, and one felt comforted, that thus it should be, that in our world should other worlds be set, of joy and melody which our human sorrow could not infect nor our sad hearts silence.

Now, the Down was reached. The avenue of birch and oak broke into light. The copse wood on our left came up to the quiet open turfy spaces, whereon the rabbits ran and a pheasant strutted. To our right the rough ground, half ling, half fern, rolled up towards distant patches of fir, and here and there the yellow swirl of an old cart track took the eye towards the "ridge of a noble Down," that to-day was well-named, for it was Black Down.

I met a worker at his task of stone-breaking and he said, without lifting head—"I suppose they be agoing to tek him away to-day, and bury him in London—he'd a deal better bide wi' us. He wasn't a man, weren't Lord Tennyson, for London, never I suppose. It was the country ways he liked the best. Kept very quiet he did, you know, sir, for he was fond of study, and could not do wi' the noise, I suppose."

"Have you ever seen him?" I said.

"Ay, ay; seed him often enough round about home. He warn't a man as wandered much, wasn't Lord Tennyson, you know. Spoke to me the other day, he did—not that he spoke to many—and told me he would thank me if I would make up a bit the path that leads to his garden door—from the lane, you know—for rains had washed it, and made the step rather a high one, and he was latterly getting old, you see—p'rhaps a bit stiff in the legs. Not but what he wur ter'ble active up to the last, was Lord Tennyson, mind yer. Eh, but he wur ter'ble fond of his grounds, and would come out in evening time and go along, under the slope of the hill, to a favourite view there, under the down, below Parson's Nob, as they do call it. Yes, you gets a good view from theer of the country right over Midhurst and Petworth as far as the sea, you can. Ay, and you can look right back, if you've a mind to it, right on

to Aldworth House. It's a view he wur particular fond of. Parson's Nob be thirty feet higher than any hill in England, they do say. Made, you know, when men hereabouts was out of work, and they just put 'em on to make it up, years ago, so as no hill should touch un." And, saying this, the sturdy Sussex mender of highways pointed me to the high ground to the south-west, and thither I went for a view.

And truly the view was glorious. In all the purple pomp of wood the great plain ran eastward and southward, with just one glimpse of silver sea out Shoreham way. And the place was haunted. One had the aged poet and his friend the general back at one's side on that fair Aldworth height as the lines rang up in memory, and one murmured:

> "You came and looked, and loved the view
> Long known and loved by me:
> Green Sussex fading into blue,
> With one grey glimpse of sea."

Need one add that the two succeeding lines brought a newer, fuller meaning now than was ever with them before, or ever will be possible again, as my friend went on with the quotation:

> "And gazing from this height alone,
> We spoke of what had been."

The shadows of the cloud shook their dark wings and moved across the distant level, or seemed to

sink to sleep and cease to move upon the ridges of far-away hills to north and east. Save for a few amber patches here and there, that told of garnered wheat fields, and some few shining towers that "lessened to the bounding main," one could have thought that a primeval forest rolled beneath right on to the far horizon. To that vast woodland at our feet, down-swept, like a rich robe, the sacred groves of the Singer, the Aldworth woods, mottled now with the amber tint of first October burning into gold. Death-white, as it seemed, in the sunlight, upon its terrace-clearing in the thick woodland, stood the house whose heart was darkened all within.

As I thought of that seemingly cruel contrast of sunlight and shade, a purple shadow fell from heaven, and a cushat moaned, as if to suit our sober grief, while, with a sound of melancholy and intermittent sob, a steam threshing-machine, down in a farm beneath the hill, made a murmur through the woodland, and gave a sense of sadness to the air.

Back from the Black Down we came, toward the poet's garden ground, and another old man, bent and grey, bobbed to our salutation, and said: "They be going to carry him away, I suppose. He'd a deal better ha' bided here; he was quite a home man, was Lord Tennyson."

There was a pathetic naturalness about this spontaneous assertion of the old man that it would

have been better if the body of the great bard could "ha' bided here." He hardly knew why, nor did his fellow-labourer who had first spoken to us, but somehow or other they both felt that, for the "lover of the fields and of the woods," the, half-mysterious silent presence that haunted the quiet home-grounds, and was "as retired as noontide dew" that lingered in the Aldworth grove, it was better far that he should have rested here, in the peaceful land of his love, and not in the far-off roaring, restless city.

"Not that we seed much on 'im at best o' times," continued the old man; "and when folks met him he was in gineral so roughly dresst they could hardly tek him for a lord. Was very short to them sometimes, I suppose; but then the fam'ly was all very kind, you know, to them as comed across 'em, 'specially down at the farm, when they went for their milk and butter there. His missus and his son particular so, and he was quite conversable wi' them as he knowed. I wish they could have left him wi' us; might 'ave buried him at Haslemere church, you know. Not," he added, with a kind of half apology for the thought, "that he was very partial to church-goin' at best o' times. Folks used to stare at 'em so, they do say, and he warn't a man as could bear being stared at, you see. Well, I don't think I ever seed him i' church, not to say seed 'im, tho' he might ha' bin there when I warn't there, you know." The

man saw a look in the face of my wife, and to correct any false impression he had made, said: "Not but what he wur a very religious man, wur Lord Tennyson, I daresay. He sent his carriage to church, you know, very reg'lar on Sundays, with the family and servants and them."

"Poor fellow," thought I, "how little do you realize that the dead poet there, in the Aldworth sanctuary, has done more than any prophet of song, for this past forty years, to keep our land and people near to God. He needs not apology for non-attendance at Haslemere Church, who, a 'votary of the Temple's inner shrine,' was always at divine worship. Yet the old man's half apology for the great poet was but a sign of the times, that seem still in the quiet countryside to demand that attendance at a place of worship shall guarantee a life of good repute, and, as one listened, one went back to conversations one had had with Westmoreland dalesmen about their own Laureate, concerning whose poems they knew nothing, concerning whose ability they had grave doubts, but as concerning whose religious life they had no hesitation in asserting it was of a high order, for 'dar bon dudn't Mister Wudswuth ga ivery Sunday as he could lig legs to t' rwoad, fra' Rydal Mount to Girsmer Chuch and back, wi' a girt prayer beuk under his arm?'"

ALDWORTH.

We went down to the little wicket gate, the step from whose threshold had seemed of late too great for him, who, hale of heart and mind, with eye undimmed and natural force unabated, had felt such stiffness in his limbs, as made him wish for a lesser step, and thence we passed into the garden. There still some few sunflowers "rayed round with flame their disks of seed"; there grew on still the single golden-eyed white chrysanthemums, and the sweet pea still blossomed in red, purple, and white. Gorgeous "red-admiral" butterflies sunned themselves, or closed their wings to flash again from freckled greyness into scarlet, and velvety black; but the garden walk was deserted, and no eyes gazed, as of old, in wonder at their jewelled splendour; under the spreading beech tree we listened to the patter of the mast as it fell upon a vacant seat. Vacant, alas, for ever! A busy little chaffering blue-tit set the delicate branch above our head swinging. A humble-bee touched a dahlia bloom, and sent a glowing petal to the ground. Ah, how his eyes would have followed bee and bird, but henceforth

> "Unwatch'd the garden bough shall sway,
> The tender blossom flutter down,
> Unloved, that beech will gather brown."

The garden seat will know him no more. For, though the great oriel window, with its pair of

"globes set in the recess," let in such sunshine, to the very chair on which the poet used to sit, as seemed to fill the room with light and gladness, there was another window beneath shrouded from all sun, and within that room lay one who had done with the use of our globe, and passed from any narrow room of study here on earth to wider worlds where knowledge is sure, and gardens are fuller of bloom and peace than ever he had known at Aldworth.

Yet were not these gardens of Aldworth full of peace as of bloom? What man had ever dwelt in sweeter peace than he, who carved upon his walls the heavenly message, "Peace and good-will to man"? Surely no nightingale ever sang from a more sacred retreat; no philosopher walked in seclusion more certain. Pleasant enough was the silence and the faithful guardianship of trees at Farringford, but here, at Aldworth, are paths of peace more absolutely sure; through all intricacy of hillside cover and oaken coppice growth—where the acorn, dropping to the ground, is the one sound that falls upon our ears—they lead on to plots of soft-cushioned turf, walled up to heaven with dusky pines, and dark, impenetrable screen of wood.

We stood on such a plot and watched the fruitage of the fine Pinsapo pine fall at the touch of the

squirrel, saw how the silver fir-tree shed its wingèd seeds; with tiny crack ever and anon they fell, and, whispering as they spun through sun and shadow, they sank, as the myriad moths sink into the grass at the first faint sign of dawn. We heard the soft sighing of the air in the pine-tree tops, but all the while a dark-cloaked figure seemed to stand within the shadow of that garden court, and told us that never again should that other dark cloaked human figure, so full of vital power and wisdom and love, walk and talk with all this world of mystery and life; that never again should the deep murmurous voice of the singer hold commune with the murmuring company of friendly trees about us. For he had passed to where no shade is needed from the sun, nor woody walls between him and a noisy world are welcomed—to where the mysteries of life are plain for angel eyes, to where, beyond all voices, there is peace.

We left the garden ground; the robin whistled; the rainbow threads of gossamer floated in our faces; we passed beneath the portico to the hall. There stood the white bust Woolner made—Woolner, alas, just gone from us—white and pale of face as he whose face we never more should see.

There too the strong young face that Laurence drew glanced at us from its sombre canvas on the

wall; and the tall brow of the Plantagenet, against its background of laurel, that Watts had immortalized, looked at us, face to face, unwavering.

But we should never see the poet any more, nor hear the voice that rings on still in all our ears that ever heard it, like a bell. Then, at the thought, our eyes fell upon a strange mechanic cylinder, that lay unheeded on the table hard by, and gave us the lie direct. There for ever, in that magic casket, was stored the living voice of the Bard. Therefrom he, being dead, should yet speak, or chant, in voice the same, but ah how different, his mighty ode, his tender lyric, to ears of far-off generations.

The house was filled with silence and with sorrow. A great hound walked disconsolately past; but we were ushered by those who could not speak into the withdrawing-room, and what a hush was there! For there withdrawn from all and sealed from sight, in solemn sleep and trust lay one, the voice of England, seer of his time and prophet of the days that are to come. Beautiful flowers and wreaths that spoke of love and reverence, and of living hearts that felt the loss, lay all around. Above the coffin's heart of oak was cast a cream-white coverlet.

Eyes that are dim for tears that press to the falling cannot see well, but this they saw, how

the roses that the poet loved, emblems of old knightly days—wild English roses—branched and bloomed about the pall. How, in the centre, words were inscribed in golden lettering: we neared and read the scroll; the last verse of the solemnest dirge a poet ever wrote for his home-going, were writ thereon, and with the prayer of that last line within our hearts we left the hall of silence and of sleep and passed back again to the rainbow gossamers and the robin's song.

But the day wore on from blue and gold to blue and grey; the distance seen betwixt the spiry cypresses by the garden walk grew into still greater distance beneath its veils of haze that added mystery to far-off wood and lawn.

The sun went up the hill, and the cypress shadows slanted to the east, and then the light failed from terrace-garden and from purple roof, and we rested, waiting for the evening star to light the poet home.

Yet some there were who rested not, but with good hands and true, in patient loving service, wove stag's-horn moss and fern from off the down, and ivy and rich-reddened maple bough from the near wood, about the little homely car that should be the poet's funeral-wain.

And the sun went over the hill, and such a sunset as even from Black Down edge is seldom

seen, made a glory in the west. The jewelled globe of crimson light touched the far hills and stayed, while black wild bars of cloud, in network of night, would seem almost to strive to make it prisoner, and bid it longer stay. But the great sun, the last that should ever shine upon the poet in his Aldworth haunts, stayed not, and, wheeling downward, seemed to cry, "He who is gone before me had no fear—I too must follow, other worlds need light."

We watched the sun sink from sight, and overhead a mighty arch of cloud, all gray before, was flushed to sudden radiance, and one felt that it needed but a little imagination to fill wide heaven with a band of seraphim, angels, and archangels, praising God for him, the latest singer, come to swell God's praise. And such full glory from that wreathed arch of changing cloud fell earthwards, that the woods of Aldworth brightened, and lustrous grew the plain, and all the beauty of an Eastern after-glow was showered on the poet's home.

Now, first the faint white evening-star looked forth. It saw, beside the pillared portico, a band of mourners and a wreathéd car. Then, while a lonely hound bayed loud, they bore the body of the poet forth and laid it upon the quiet moss-lined car, fit for some arch-Druid singer borne

to burial, and over this was spread the rose-embroidered pall, and over it white wreaths. Then was the master's horse brought quietly from the neighbouring stall, the lamps were lit each side the car, for the darkness was falling fast; and so, without sound, save of quiet wheels and soft feet upon the ground, and sighing, as of souls in sorrow from the leaves crushed underfoot —they left one bravest heart behind them that must beat on still, and bore him whose heart should beat no more from the quiet home of his life and labour and love to the roaring city of his tomb.

As one writes, one sees the gentle horse, new-harnessed, turn his head, wistfully wondering at the unaccustomed silence, and gaze upon the burden that he is to bear; sees the sad faces of the servants he called friends, pale in the paling light, and one asks oneself while the solemn procession moves up the laurelled grove toward the Aldworth gates, if it has ever been given to a bard, thus fittingly and in all solemn simplicity and grace, to leave his home at ending of an all-golden day, and go toward his rest, by dewfall, beneath the gathering stars.

The Aldworth groves were left behind, and we gained the moor; very dark and black, the Down sloped up towards the lingering sunset light.

Villagers here, and villagers there, in groups, were waiting with bared heads to watch the dumb procession pass in the purple twilight. Then, while the bats flew overhead, and the pheasants called, and an owl crowed from a far wood, and a beetle hummed across our path, we entered the long oak-canopied hollow way that led us by its mile and a half, or two miles, of autumn-scented leafy darkness down toward the village in the vale.

The fragrance of flowers on the coffin and in the little chaise, that bore these trophies of affection behind it, became under this canopy of boughs and in the heavy dewfall almost overpowering; but, as the darkness fell, the effects of moving light and flickering shade from the lamps on either side the funeral-car were weird and beautiful. Some one at my side said, "with such a glory gone before we need not fear to follow on." They were but the words of an old hymn, but they seemed to have a new meaning for those who followed down that darkened lane.

At the last, from the breathless scented way we emerged, as it seemed almost in sight of the little town, and felt the cool air on our foreheads; saw lights twinkling in the mist, and heard a distant train go thundering by, but our eyes and our hearts were in Heaven, for all the stars had come to say farewell. There, above the Pleiades, to the east

shone the Charioteer, and Cassiopeia sat over, high-lifted in her jewelled chair. The starry Swan flew at the zenith across or rather up the flood of worlds that mingled in a milky haze. And over Hindhead, level, and, as it would seem, at rest, the great "Plow" stood; Jupiter hung in mid air magnificent and of solemn whiteness, and Mars burned ruddy gold.

We neared the village. A church bell tolled. Sadly, I thought of him who was so fond of listening to the bells of Yule from towers "folded in the mist." He was going home triumphant; if bells rang, one almost thought they should have pealed their cheeriest for him.

The townsfolk of Haslemere looked from their windows; the saddler put down his awl, the baker left his loaves, and out of their rosy cottage doors the people poured to see the Poet's home-going.

So, by the village street, with here and there an added few to bear us company and swell with their tramping the sound of our going, we passed along from the lights and lamps to the almost lampless dark. High on our left, upon the causeway, pattered the children, close by us walked the elders, man and wife, none speaking, all hushed and reverent of mien, till the engine whistle was heard, and the signal lights flashed into red and green. The station had been reached. The solemn journey was

ended, and the swift train, iron of will, and heedless of heart, bore us far away.

So the Poet was carried from the land of his life and love and labour. A feeling of fitness mingled with the sorrow. It was better to leave the Surrey hills when they were muffled in the darkness; easier to say farewell at night than at the morn.

And the engine throbbed and the wheels beat out their rhythmic tune, and so, to a kind of melancholy music, the Singer went through the darkened land of sleep, towards the far-off lurid-lighted town.

It may have been that one was in the mood for such thoughts, but one did not seem to have realized the restlessness of that city, where no sleep is, till, as the train neared Waterloo that night, to bring the Sleeper home, one saw "in heaven the light of London flaring like a dreary dawn," and felt that there can never fall the night, nor ever quite work cease.

But the train drew up in the station. Few people knew of its coming. Not with parade or civic pomp or even with ordinary sign of funereal trapping came "the honoured guest" to be a citizen for ever; but simply and almost unobserved, the coffin with its wreaths of snow was borne quietly to a hooded wain. Such an one as might ply with

living flowers and palms and ferns for some festal occasion; such as I have seen often used to take those wild flowers, the city children, from the slum to country air.

And so, without a plume of sable woe or sign of mourning, stout-hearted horses took England's flower of song out of the sounding station into the roaring streets, towards the Abbey.

There was a pause half way down York Road in the little cortège of cabs and carriages that followed the funeral waggon, and a small crowd collected, but they hardly knew why, only they saw this, that the British flag, the Union Jack, which had been laid upon the coffin at the station, was now carefully dispread, and fell in folds that shone out as it passed from light to light.

Then, high in Heaven, above the sound of the trampling men and rattling cabs, we heard the sound of a funeral bell. Solemnly enough it sounded, and as we crossed Westminster Bridge one could not help remembering that the same river that bore its funeral sound away toward the roaring city and the night, had, some forty-two years ago, the sound of the poet's happy marriage bells cast upon its waters, where Thames, along its silent, sunny level, streamed through the osiered eyots beneath the Shiplake hill. Passing swiftly over the dark river that streamed now between

its jewelled curves of lamps and moaned and mourned at the piers, the procession walked slowly, and one heard, from lips of passers by, beneath St. Margaret's Church, the first words of recognition, that Tennyson had come for funeral.

At foot-pace the carriages moved on behind the Union Jack that led us through the dark, along between a crowd of men who stood uncovered, through the Sanctuary door into Dean's Yard, and drew up at a dim portal that leads to the cloisters. The bell tolled on. Three or four clergy, in canonicals, were waiting to lead the way, and the chief mourners and their friends followed the burden, swathed in double pall, down through the dim-lit cloistered gloom, through iron gates, that opened and shut behind with hollow sound, and up the steep steps and through the narrow door into the high arched chapel of St. Faith. There, in that narrow room, that linked us in thought for a moment with the crypt of old St. Paul's (for it was to her, the beautiful girl of Aquitaine, who died because she would not bow the knee to Diana that that old crypt was also dedicated), our burden was brought to rest. Purple was the floor, imperial purple draped the wall, and folds of purple cloth shrouded the high trestles on which the coffin should lie.

Fitly here the coffin of him who sang of empire was laid in quiet down. They took the pall and its

broidered roses from off him and laid with reverent care the Flag of Queen and country over it. And tender hands reached out full arm-length and placed reverently upon it the wreaths that nearest and dearest had woven from rose and Roman laurel. There, while the soft light fell, flooding with rich colour the high uplifted body of the Bard, a hush fell upon the little congregation, they bowed the knee, and heard a voice which seemed an echo of that October martyr, fair St. Faith, sounding from sixteen centuries away, and saying, "O Saviour of the world who by Thy cross and precious blood hast redeemed us, save us and help us, we humbly beseech Thee." No human voice from within the coffin said, "Amen," but a spirit voice of him we mourned added its deep sonorous "Yea, Amen," and none of those who there and then together repeated the Lord's Prayer, but felt refreshed by thoughts of the common Fatherhood of God, and of the common brotherhood in earth and Heaven of which the Poet sang.

Then, leaving behind the Laureate to his night's rest beneath the lights that burned unwavering, we waited for the morrow. There were no watchers needed in that chapel of St. Faith. Sweet Faith be sure watched there with sleepless eyes. Close by, through doorway opening to their rest, the spirits of the great singers, all his friends, might

come and go. And through the night sweet shadowy forms of those he had loved and lost and found again, might bend with welcome or with watch above the casket we had left behind.

But what had Tennyson to do with undertakerage and funeral upholstery and all its high refined accompaniment? In faith of stern simplicity he lived and died. In simpleness his obsequies should be. He who had lived in such deep quietude would lie in quiet waiting till the morn. The flag he loved should wrap him safe from harm, the gentle flowers be amulets of his sleep.

All London woke that morning with but one thought: "This is the Laureate's funeral day." Men of business spoke of it as they hurried to their trains. Omnibus drivers and cabmen talked of it as they waited for their fares; urchins mingled with the early crowd outside the Abbey precincts, and cried their wares. These were portraits of the poet, and, beneath the rough woodcut, the poems, "Crossing the Bar," and "Come not when I am dead," all for one penny!

It was curious to note among the crowd how truly people felt that a great man had come unto his rest. No trumpets were blown. No display of city pomp was made. No soldiers, no statesman lent officialism or municipal recognition, but

the dark crowd was visibly and deeply moved, and as I mixed with it I learnt something of the reason. "I don't know nuffin about Lord Tennyson," said a roughish coster at my side, "but he was the bloke as wrote about the 'light brigade,' that's wot brings me here guvnor."

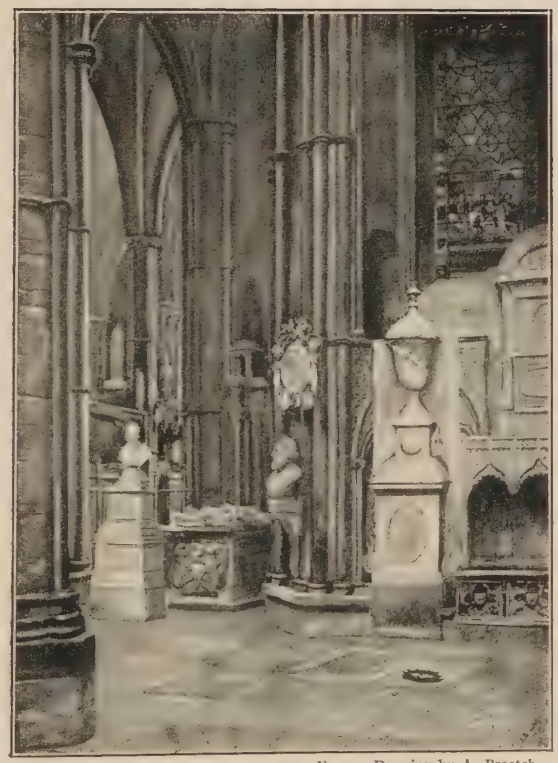
We entered Dean's Yard. Everything—crowd, carriages, policemen, people—seemed calm, with a great unwonted calm. And though I had twice to pass out right through the great black stream of folk that surged in through the cloister door, I noticed nothing that would lead me to think these people had only come to see a show. On the contrary, it seemed they were touched to the heart, "and knowest thou not that the Lord had taken our Master from our head to-day? Yea, I know it, hold ye your peace," seemed to be the dominant thought that spoke in their eyes or was whispered by their mien.

The great Abbey was filled from end to end. The galleries of the Triforium were thronged; and behind the barriers in the nave and aisles was no more room. But calm and quiet and devotional reverence was over all. "These English hate a show," so said a man, who had but just returned from presence over sea at Rénan's funeral. "It's like a country funeral," he said, "no military band, no speech, no flags, no plumes," and he

was right. The 11,000 people who had asked for tickets of admittance to the Abbey were not people who cared for a show, though they did care most devoutly to testify by their presence that they felt that "a power had passed from off the earth," that a man "who was from God sent forth" had now again to God returned; and they mourned for a loss to the nation's life as they would mourn saying "O my brother."

In the absolute spontaneity of that vast gathering of representative men and women, was eloquence more than words to the power of Tennyson to touch the hearts of the people. It was the thought of that power to abide as well as touch that was on that funeral morning balm for sadness. For it was not a sad gathering. Few tears fell. Full of years, wisdom, and honour, and like a shock of corn in its good golden time was the Poet borne to burial, and the procession that bore him thither was triumphal; a home-bringing, with a shout of praise.

We gathered in the chapter-house. A sister of the Poet sat quietly waiting the summons to take her place in the procession; round her were a few faces that bore the Tennyson stamp upon them —the fine high brow of the Plantagenet. That other Alfred-like brother, Arthur, was not there, so far as I could observe, nor Horatio, nor the aged



From a Drawing by A. Broatch.

TENNYSON'S GRAVE IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

elder brother, Frederick, last left of those three "Somersby Nightingales." He, doubtless, far too frail, and too far beyond-seas to be present;—yet would he be present in his thought with that dark company. Nor was it possible to avoid notice how amongst the mourners on this, the very day when the world was thinking of great naval discoveries, there were faces so like that heroic sailor-soul whose epitaph the Laureate had written for the marble portrait on the Abbey walls, that one might guess descendants of Sir John Franklin were of the company; but for the most part the mourners were friends. I spoke with one, a friend of the Laureate's in old school-days at Louth. "Ah," said he, "I can see Alfred now, sitting alone when we passed on to play, just where he loved to sit, upon an old post in the path, halfway between his lodgings and the school. He would sit for hours there. Fine tall likely lads, both he and Charles; could have done anything they liked with bat and ball; but they were other-minded: games had no interest for them. They were always about together, such brothers as never were. Not that they cared much for books either, at least not for the books we used at school, but they were always reading, and they had their own ideas of work as well as play, had those Tennyson lads, in the old Louth days." He added, "I daresay it was well for England that it

was so. I'll tell you one thing they had; we could all understand, they were generous and warm of heart, and they never forgot old friends." So saying, the grey-haired old man drew from his pocket a letter written to him by his old Lincolnshire schoolfellow as late as August of last year.

Then, after waiting some half an hour, the great bell overhead sobbed and sounded, and down the steps we came from the chapter-house to take our places in the procession. One could not but be struck by the faces of those men that called him friend, who waited either side the coffin till the word of command to go forward was given. Jowett, white of head and fair of face as a child; Lecky, the historian, tall above his fellows, with cheeks unlined of care, boyish almost of mien; Lord Selborne, ex-Lord Chancellor, pale, worn, and bowed; Lord Salisbury, burly, with head bent forward, but upright of body, dark and stern. There Froude stood; Butler, Master of Trinity, grizzled a little and sad, was seen; Lord Kelvin, eager of face, bushy of head somewhat, was there; none sadder than Lord Rosebery, as it seemed, save the sun-tanned face of the friend so loved for Lionel's sake, the Marquis of Dufferin and Ava. Like silver gleamed the upstanding front of hair, once so golden yellow, from the forehead of that patriot statesman, firm and good, whom the Laureate's verse had honoured, the Duke

of Argyll. Still dark, though lined with grey, fell the straight hair either side the pathetically anxious but keen face of the great doctor, Sir James Paget. The manly figure of Mr. White, the American minister, was also to be noted. But there were two friends expected not present. One, the aged premier, Mr. Gladstone, the other, the veteran painter, whom I once heard the Laureate speak of as "the most thoughtful of our time," Watts, the friend for nearly half a century. Of this latter it may be averred that no man in England was more grieved than he that illness, which kept him to his couch, prevented his attendance as pall-bearer. He who, we had reason to know, felt the honour of that invitation as great as any that could be bestowed, was surely with us in tender thought there on the chapter-house steps on that memorable October morning.

Yet was there one other form hoped for and missed by all of us who, in our loyalty, cared for England's honour in honouring her greatest and her best, and a very real sense of regret was felt that lack of precedent or other pressing engagements should have prevented the beloved Prince of the people from being in person with those who buried a prince of the people's song,

Then the coffin, draped in the rich colour of the banner of England, moved slowly on between an

avenue of men, princes and peers by right of intellect divine. There stood nobles who make England great; and there a gallant six hundred of true knights of heart and head, who had come to pay the last tribute to him to whom they owed such loving fealty.

And the great sad-throated bell tolled on; and the coffin went forward: the echo of the feet of those who bore it came back upon us as we followed, so great was the hush; and suddenly, in the distance, it was seen to mount above the mourners' heads. A pealing organ was heard faint and far in the distance, and, through the open doors, was seen a glorious burst of sun, so that we seemed to see the body of the poet

> "Somewhere, far off!—pass on and on and go
> From less to less, and vanish into light."

Then the six hundred closed in behind the mourners and joined the vast procession, and the cloisters rang aloud, and the bells tolled on and the organ louder pealed.

We entered, and the coffin, carried to the left, passed down to where, behind the screen, Wordsworth, the latest Laureate, listening sat. One wished the screen away so that he and Arnold might have looked, if it were but with marble eyes, upon us as we turned our faces eastward and went through the long line of expectant people up the long lane kept

by the Gordon Home lads and volunteers from the various city corps, towards the choir.

Mist and sunlight and music and sound of a slow marching stream mingled and melted away as the body of the poet passed the narrow doorway to the choir.

But not so died away the thought of a deathless resurrection that had floated far and wide, to Croft and Purcell's choral music, and seemed to rise and fall and cling to roof and gallery with the words, "I am the resurrection and the life."

> "As wave on wave of charmed sound
> Hung, crystal-fixed, the glorious building round."

The coffin passed on toward the high raised resting-place, draped with the rose-embroidered pall, beneath the lantern. The mourners and the dark procession filled their allotted seats. Clear-voiced and strong, a reader read St. Paul's great resurrection poem, "Now is Christ risen from the dead." Sorrow filled our hearts, but sunlight fell from a far rose window, and a great shaft of glory struck downward to the wreaths that lay above the sleeping poet. The roses in the Roman laurel glowed, and gleamed the red, white, blue of the flag that was the poet's pall.

Then was there silence that could be felt; and softly, like a sweet balm from Heaven, floated forth the tender music and the lofty strain, "Sunset and

evening star." As one thinks of it now, one feels the fulness of the tide that, in its sleep, turned again home. One realizes the joy with which the passenger who, all the night, had faith in Him who held the helm, saw face to face, full-flushed and glorious with the new morning's glow, the Pilot whom he trusted; but, at the time, one's heart was with the form laid there in dumbness, underneath the shroud, that only a few months since, it would seem, was walking in the garden of his island home, where the words first took, in sudden inspiration, deathless shape.

Nor could that other hymn of strength and ever-forward looking hope which next came borne on wings of sweetest sound upon us, avail to prevent "the silent voices of the dead" calling us then "so often back" to the sunlight that was gone. Yet many a soul that listened there in pain thanked God for this the poet's last great gift to all his friends. And with grateful hearts, when the organ ceased, the mourners stepped toward the purple-bordered grave, where, close by Chaucer's dust and Cowley's sleep, and near to Browning's rest, should lie, till crack of doom, the great Victorian bard.

Longfellow's bust looked on with meditative eye as the vast procession went toward the tomb. There, round the grave, the pall-bearers bowed their heads or stood motionless and wrapped in thought.

The pilgrims bound for Canterbury, in the stained-glass panes above, might well have stopped to see this greater pilgrimage below. There, close beneath, stood "the dear master in our classic town" himself so lately come from "halfway down the shadow of the grave"; and many a man of those grey-haired guests who came with him to say farewell, must have thought of the land where no shadow is, and farewells are not spoken. It was a touching sight, too deep for tears, and yet for one strong man, who stood head and shoulders above those near him, calm and stately and moveless as a pillar, for him who had indeed been pillar of strength and stay for all these years to that old father laid to solemn rest, tears might well have fallen, nay, tears fell; and prayers may well have been spoken, nay, prayers were said.

Suddenly, at ending of the collect—the Dean, feeling doubtless for the loss of his friend of forty years, could scarce speak audibly—the organ rolled a great triumphant peal, and the hymn:

> "Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty,
> All Thy works shall praise Thy name in earth and sky and sea,"

was taken up with heart by the vast congregation.

So Heber wrote; but Heber could little have thought that, in the far-off years, above the grave of one who had taught a whole nation of this

praise, a multitude, gathered from all parts of the kingdom, would praise God for this preacher and this teacher, and go forth feeling that, though Tennyson was dead, man's praise to God for all His wondrous works was, through His wondrous work the Singer, clearer and more strong.

The benediction was pronounced; the Dead March mourned forth its melancholy strains; and from the dark lips of the grave came the voice of the poet himself:

"Hush! the Dead March wails in the people's ears:
The dark crowd moves, and there are sobs and tears
The black earth yawns: the mortal disappears;
Ashes to ashes, dust to dust;
He is gone, who seem'd so great.
Gone; but nothing can bereave him
Of the force he made his own
Being here, and we believe him
Something far advanced in state,
And that he wears a truer crown
Than any wreath that man can weave him.
Speak no more of his renown,
Lay your earthly fancies down,
And in the vast cathedral leave him.
God accept him, Christ receive him!"

CHAPTER VIII.

LINCOLNSHIRE SCENERY AND CHARACTER AS ILLUSTRATED BY MR. TENNYSON.

[This and the following chapter were contributed to *Macmillan's Magazine* in 1873-74 by my father, then Rector of Halton Holegate.]

AS a Lincolnshire man, and long familiar with the district in which Mr. Tennyson was born, I have often been struck with the many illustrations of our county's scenery and character to be found in his poems. What Virgil has done for Mantua and its slow, winding river, what Horace has done for Bandusia and the Apulian Apennines, what Wordsworth has done for the English Lakes and Scott for the Highlands, that our poet has done for the homelier scenes of his boyhood and early manhood in Mid-Lincolnshire.

They live for us in his pages, depicted with all the truth and accuracy of a photograph. This, I think, will appear from the following paper, in which I have sought to bring together the chief passages that bear upon Lincolnshire scenery out of Mr. Tennyson's poems.

And to begin with, his birthplace, Somersby—of which parish Mr. Tennyson's father was the rector, and where he passed with little interval the first twenty-five years of his life—is a quiet wooded village, "pleasantly situated," as the guide-books say, at the foot of the South Wold. The country about it is soft and pastoral, with small villages lying close together. To the north rises the long back of the wold, with its steep white road that climbs the hill above Thetford: to the south the land slopes gently to a small deep-channelled brook which rises not far from Somersby, and flows just below the parsonage garden. This home-scene is pictured to us in the "Ode to Memory, written very early in life," first published 1830.

"Come forth, I charge thee, arise,
Thou of the many tongues, the myriad eyes!
Thou comest not with shows of flaunting vines
Unto mine inner eye
Divinest memory!
Thou wert not nursed by the waterfall
Which ever sounds and shines
A pillar of white light upon the wall
Of purple cliffs, aloof descried,
Come from the woods that belt the gray hill-side,
The seven elms, the poplars four
That stand beside my father's door,
And chiefly from the book that loves
To purl o'er matted cress, and ribbéd sand,
Or dimple in the dark of rushy coves
Drawing into his narrow earthern urn,
In every elbow and turn

The filtered tribute of the rough woodland.
O! hither lead thy feet!
Pour round mine ears the livelong bleat
Of the thickfleecéd sheep from wattled folds,
Upon the ridgéd wolds;
When the first matinsong hath wakéd[1] loud
Over the dark dewy earth forlorn,
What time the amber morn
Forth gushes from beneath a low hung cloud."

Surely very remarkable verse for a boy still in his teens! "Non sine Dîs animosus infans." But mark the illustration of the local scenery—"the woods that belt the gray hill-side"—the trees of the spot—elm and poplar—and, above all, the brook. This brook will occur again and again in Mr. Tennyson's poems. It rises, we have seen, a little way above Somersby, runs beneath the village, as here described, over "matted cress and ribbéd sand," "narrow"—for a boy could jump it—with deep banks, eating its way with innumerable links and turnings, and serving to drain a large district, "drawing into its narrow earthen urn in every elbow and turn the filtered tribute of the rough woodland." A little below Somersby it is dammed up to turn a small water-mill. And there by its banks we find the poet, in another exquisite lyric—"The Miller's Daughter"—published in 1833.

[1] In later editions "waken'd."

"How dear to me in youth, my love,
Was everything about the mill,
The black and silent pool above,
The pool beneath that ne'er stood still:
The meal-sacks on the whitened floor,
The dark round of the dripping wheel,
The very air about the door
Made misty with the floating meal!

I loved from off the bridge to hear
The rushing sound the water made,
And see the fish that everywhere
In the back-current glanced and played:
Low down the tall flag-flower that sprung
Beside the noisy stepping-stones,
And the massed chestnut-boughs that hung
Thick studded over with white cones."[1]

The brook has a sandy bottom, where shoals of small fish delight to disport themselves. And it

[1] In later editions these verses appear as:

Or from the bridge I lean'd to hear
The milldam rushing down with noise,
And see the minnows everywhere
In crystal eddies glance and poise,
The tall flag-flowers when they sprung
Below the range of stepping-stones
Or those three chestnuts near, that hung
In masses thick with milky cones.

. . . . . .

I loved the brimming wave that swam
Thro' quiet meadows round the mill,
The sleepy pool above the dam,
The pool beneath it never still,
The meal-sacks on the whiten'd floor,
The dark round of the dripping wheel,
The very air about the door
Made misty with the floating meal.

may be that it was here that Mr. Tennyson took his *simile* in Enid, where the panic-stricken followers of false Lémours vanish at the charge of Geraint,

> ———"Like a shoal
> Of darting fish that on a summer morn
> Come slipping o'er their shadows on the sand.
> But if a man who stands upon the brink
> But lift a shining hand against the sun,
> There is not left the twinkle of a fin
> Betwixt the cressy islets white in flower."

Allusions to the same brook may be seen in "In Memoriam," No. c., where it is described as swerving

> "To left and right thro' meadowy curves
> That feed the mothers of the flock."

It flows in an easterly direction below Somersby, "a rivulet, then a river," and after a course of some length, through thorp and village, taking its name from each in turn, it enters the sea at a spot called Gibraltar Point, where it forms Wainfleet haven. Here begins that long line of sand-hills or dunes which stretches northward to the Humber, and which by a narrow ridge wards off the German Ocean from the rich Lincolnshire marsh, a tract of pasture land varying from four to eight miles in width, which lies between the sea and the wold.

These sand-hills, with the flat shore on the one side and the fertile marsh on the other, find frequent mention in Mr. Tennyson's poems. His

first sight of the sea was on the Lincolnshire coast; and there it is known that many of his earlier poems were written and revised, *παρα θινα πολυφλοισβοιο θαλασσης.*

The quotations will show how accurately he has seized the peculiar features of our coast, its long-retreating tides, its salt creeks, its heavy-plunging seas. Thus, to go back to the "Ode to Memory"—

> "Artist-like
> Ever retiring thou dost gaze
> On the prime labours of thine early days:
> No matter what the sketch might be,
> Whether the high field or the bushless Pike:
> Or even a sand-built ridge
> Of heaped hills that mound the sea
> Overblown with murmurs harsh,
> Or even a lowly cottage, whence we see
> Stretch'd wide and wild the waste enormous marsh,
> When[1] from the frequent bridge,
> Emblems or glimpses of eternity,[2]
> The trenched waters run from sky to sky."

In the "Palace of Art" we have these picturesque lines:

> "A still salt pool, lock'd in with bars of sand,
> Left on the shore; that hears all night
> The plunging seas draw backward from the land
> Their moon-led waters white."

There we see our coast at low water, with its shallow creeks banked in by amber bars of sand;

[1] In later editions "where."
[2] In later editions "Like emblems of eternity."

and in "Locksley Hall" we have that same coast in another aspect:

"Locksley Hall, that in the distance overlooks the sandy tracts,
And the hollow ocean-ridges roaring into cataracts."

We hear in this the mighty sound of the breakers as they fling themselves at full tide with long-gathered force upon the slope sands of Skegness or Maplethorpe on the Lincolnshire coast. Nowhere is ocean grander in a storm; nowhere is the thunder of the sea louder, nor its waves higher, nor the spread of their waters on the beach wider. Mr. Tennyson has pictured it all in a splendid passage in one of his latest works, "The Last Tournament":

"Arthur, deign'd not use of word or sword,
But let the drunkard, ...
Fall, as the crest of some slow arching wave,
Heard in dead night along that table shore
Drops flat; and after, the great waters break
Whitening for half a league, and thin themselves,
Far over sands marbled with moon and cloud,
From less and less to nothing."

The only fault here is the unworthiness of the object which suggests the comparison. But the *simile* itself is magnificent, and reminds one of Virgil's "neque ipso monte minor procumbit" (Georg. iii., 1177), a poet with whom Mr. Tennyson offers many points of resemblance.

Three other passages I find which bear evidence of being composed on recollections of the Lincolnshire shore.

This from "A Dream of Fair Women":

> "So shape chased shape as swift as, when to land
> Bluster the winds and tides the selfsame way,
> Crisp foam-flakes scud along the level sand,
> Torn from the fringe of spray."

And this from the "Lotos Eaters":

> "How sweet it were . .
> To watch the crisping ripples on the beach,
> And tender curving lines of creamy spray."

And this from the same poem:

> "The charméd sunset linger'd low adown
> In the red West . . . .
> They sat them down upon the yellow sand,
> Between the sun and moon upon the shore."

With regard to the last, I may remark that Sir H. Holland, in his very interesting "Life Recollections," expresses surprise that no writer in prose or verse has noticed the phenomenon of the sun and moon both at full above the horizon at the same time. But he must have overlooked these lines, which show that long ago Mr. Tennyson had seen and recorded this very sight. Where he saw it admits of hardly a doubt—on the low dunes of the Lincolnshire coast, where at one time the red sun may be seen setting over the wide marsh, and the full moon rising out of the eastern sea.

Probably it was from the same position that Mr. Tennyson watched those glorious autumn sunsets which painters are familiar with on our flat

coast, one of which he has sketched for us in a single line—

"The wide-winged sunset of the misty marsh."

Further illustrations of the Lincolnshire landscape, and particularly the landscape about Somersby, are met with in "In Memoriam," lxxxvii., xciii., xcviii., xcix., c.—Edition 1850. Here we find a characteristic of the county. The "sheepwalk up the windy wold"; the "knoll," where the cattle love to lie in summer, adorned with "ash and haw," the ash being pre-eminently the Lincolnshire tree, and noticed elsewhere by the poet for its backwardness in coming into leaf:

"Delaying as the tender ash delays
To clothe herself, when all the woods are green."

And again—

"More black than ash-buds in the front of March."

The "quarry," trenched along the chalk hill, the brook, "pleasant fields and farms," the trees with unlopped boughs, not trimmed up to the likeness of radishes as is the case in some counties, but free to spread their "dark arms" over field and lane. One other mark of the district may be noticed from "In Memoriam," xxviii., and that is the nearness of the Lincolnshire villages to each other—as evidenced by the poet hearing at one time four peals of Christmas bells. It is the

custom in Lincolnshire to ring for a month or six weeks before Christmas, and a late traveller at that period of the year may often realize for himself the following description :

"The time draws near the birth of Christ ;
The moon is hid : the night is still ;
The Christmas bells from hill to hill
Answer each other in the mist.

Four voices of four hamlets round,
From far and near, on mead and moor,
Swell out and fail, as if a door
Were shut between me and the sound :

Each voice four changes on the wind,
That now dilate, and now decrease,
Peace and goodwill, goodwill and peace,
Peace and goodwill, to all mankind."

Such are some of the many illustrations of Lincolnshire scenery to be derived from Mr. Tennyson's works, and these by no means exhaust the list. "Mariana," "The Dying Swan," and "The May Queen" are full of reminiscences of Lincolnshire—Lincolnshire landscape, Lincolnshire skyscape, and Lincolnshire wild-flowers.

Take this from "Mariana" :

"From the dark fen the oxen's low
Came to her ; without hope of change,
In sleep she seem'd to walk forlorn,
Till cold winds woke the gray-eyed morn
About the lonely moated grange."

The grange itself still exists amongst us, with

its old moat unhealthily near, and sluggish, stagnant waters thickcoated with duck-weed, just as it is here described:

"About a stone-cast from the wall
A sluice with blacken'd waters slept,
And o'er it many, round and small,
The cluster'd marish-mosses crept."

These marish-mosses, "green and still," appear again in "The Dying Swan," which opens with a sketch sad enough, but which will be recognised as Lincolnshire under its least cheerful aspect, when the east-wind prevails:

"The plain was grassy, wild and bare,
Wide, wild, and open to the air,
Which had built up everywhere
An under-roof of doleful gray."

The desolate feeling called forth here is kept up in the closing lines of the poem—lines of matchless melody, descriptive of common, familiar growths, such as the locality presented to his view:

"And the creeping mosses and clambering weeds,
And the willow-branches hoar and dank,
And the wavy swell of the soughing reeds,
And the wave-worn horns of the echoing bank,
And the silvery marish-flowers that throng
The desolate creeks and pools among,
Were flooded over with eddying song."

From "The May Queen" I may quote, as illustrative of the landscape—

"You'll never see me more in the long gray fields at night;
When from the dry dark wold the summer airs blow cool
On the oat-grass, and the sword-grass, and the bulrush in the pool."

This enumeration of the various grasses leads us to the allusions in Mr. Tennyson's poems to the wild-flowers of our land. A whole garland of these might easily be gathered from the "May Queen" alone; and conspicuous among them would be the marsh-marigold, which "shines like fire in swamps and hollows gray." Nor is it for our wild-flowers only that we look in these poems. In one short piece entitled "Song," which stands next to the "Ode to Memory" and with it was published in 1830, Mr. Tennyson has given us a garden—an old-fashioned English garden, with old-fashioned English flowers in the season of decay —such a garden as may still be found attached to quiet, simple homes in Lincolnshire. I shall ask for space to quote the whole of it:

"A Spirit haunts the year's last hours,
Dwelling amid their[1] yellowing bowers:
To himself he talks;
For at eventide, listening earnestly,
At his work you may hear him sob and sigh
In the walks;
Earthward he boweth the heavy stalks
Of the mouldering flowers:

[1] In later editions "these."

Heavily hangs the broad sunflower
Over its grave i' the earth so chilly;
Heavily hangs the hollyhock,
Heavily hangs the tiger-lily.

The air is damp, and hush'd, and close,
As a sick man's room when he taketh repose
An hour before death;
My very heart faints and my whole soul grieves
At the moist rich smell of the rotting leaves,
And the breath
Of the fading edges of box beneath,
And the year's last rose.
Heavily hangs the broad sunflower
Over its grave the earth so chilly;
Heavily hangs the hollyhock,
Heavily hangs the tiger-lily."

What true and faithful painting! And this was written more than forty years ago!—before the Pre-Raphaelite was heard of. Painter and poet, not a few of them have since trodden in Mr. Tennyson's footsteps, and earned a just renown by careful and minute delineation of Nature. "More can raise the flowers now, for all have got the seed." All honour to him who first introduced it amongst us—who "once in a golden hour" cast this seed into the earth, who has opened our eyes to the glory of common things—enforces more than any man of this generation the Master's lesson, "Consider the lilies, how they grow"—taught us to see in the meanest object at our feet the work of a Divine Architect, full of wisdom and full of beauty, "a miracle of design."

For illustration of Lincolnshire character we naturally turn to those well-known personages, "The Northern Farmers," old and new style. As regards the first, I will only say that he is a type of the past: that the man, like the mastodon no longer exists amongst us. That he did exist, and that Mr. Tennyson saw him, I have no doubt. But he has long been in his grave, and a more refined heir stalks about his fields.

With regard to the second, he, too, with his horse "Proputty," is of a bygone age. The present Lincolnshire farmer goes to market in a gig, or more commonly by rail. But though the outward man has perished, not so has his teaching. Not to marry the governess; to look out for a wife with a dowry; the value of money; how the having it makes a "good un"; the want of it, the thief; these are sentiments by no means obsolete, not confined to one class, or one country, or one age. Materfamilias in her London house is entirely in accord with the Northern Farmer on all these points. Only she hardly expresses herself so forcibly. And it is for this, for the wonderful vigour and raciness of the language, that the poem before us, and its pendant, are so truly admirable and valuable. Our dear old Doric dialect is—I grieve to say—dying out. H.M. Inspector is robbing us of our father's tongue.

We see the spoiler everywhere at his ruthless work, and we are powerless to stop him. In a few years we shall all talk alike and spell alike, and all alike use words to conceal our real thoughts. The more the reason that we should be grateful to Mr. Tennyson for thus preserving to us two types of the yet unsophisticated Lincoln farmer in these unperishable poems.

I am no critic, but when I hear what the critics say, the talk there is of Mr. Tennyson wanting force, and the power to individualize, I wish to ask where will you find these qualities if not in the two "Northern Farmers"?

Perhaps I might add to their portraits—as distinct as they in individuality—the sketch of Sir Walter Vivian in the epilogue to the Princess, whom as a Lincolnshire man, I would fain claim for a compatriot:

> "No little lily-handed Baronet he,
> A great broad-shoulder'd, genial Englishman,
> A lord of fat prize oxen and of sheep,
> A raiser of huge melons and of pine,
> A patron of some thirty charities,
> A pamphleteer on guano and on grain,
> A quarter-sessions chairman, abler none;
> Fair-hair'd and redder than a windy morn;
> Now shaking hands with him, now him, of those
> That stood the nearest—now address'd to speech—
> Who spoke few words and pithy."

But I must close. If my reader has been interested in the subject, I would invite him, when

he has leisure, to verify Mr. Tennyson's illustrations by visiting the district to which they refer.

Lincolnshire has hitherto had scarce justice done her. Viewed by the hasty traveller from the railroad which passes over the fens and avoids the hill country, she has been denied a claim to beauty —"a flat land, a prosaic land, a land of corn and cattle; rich if you like, as old Bœotia was rich in material riches, in fat sheep and oxen, but not rich in interest for the tourist, not a land to foster genius and feed the imagination."

But surely the truth is otherwise. Lincolnshire —a great part of it—in home pastoral scenery is not behind other counties, while in her wide-extended views, in her open wolds, in her sounding shore and shining sands, in her glorious parish churches, with their gigantic steeples, she has charms and beauties of her own. And as to fostering genius, has she not proved herself to be the "meet nurse of a poetic child"? For here, be it remembered, here in the heart of the land, in Mid-Lincolnshire, Alfred Tennyson was born; here he spent all his earliest and freshest days; here he first felt the divine afflatus, and found fit material for his muse—

"The Spirit of the Lord began to move him at times in the camp of Dan, between Zorah and Eshtaol."

CHAPTER IX.

VIRGIL AND TENNYSON.

VIRGIL and Tennyson! the one born B.C. 70, the other A.D. 1809—what can they have in common who are separated by such an interval of years, and whose surroundings are so entirely different? The one, the poet of the heathen autocrat Augustus, born in an age when "the world by wisdom knew not God," when if there was any real belief at all in men's hearts it was divided between "lords many and gods many"—the other, the Laureate of Queen Victoria, a worshipper of the one true God, a Christian, and an upholder of Christian verities—how can a parallel be drawn between the two? Certainly the accidents of their age, religion, polity, and outward manners seem to set them very wide apart. But these are but accidents. There remains, after due weight is given to these dividing influences, much in the two men themselves that admits of comparison—much in the works with which they have severally enriched the world.

It will be the purport of this paper to draw

out this comparison: to bring together and set before our readers passages from Virgil and Mr. Tennyson which shew them to be of a kindred spirit—alike in natural gifts and in the careful cultivation of those gifts: men cast much in the same mould, who have the same tastes and the same studies, who on many points think alike, and feel alike, and write alike: true brother poets, linked together by many a subtle link that is discoverable by students of their poems. And first, the two poets have this in common, that they are close and diligent observers of physical phenomena, investigators of nature's laws, watchers of the skies and of the sea, and of all that grows or moves upon the earth. Especially are they remarkable for their love of astronomy. Take, for example, these splendid lines from the "Georgics," ii. 475, in evidence of Virgil's thirst after the great science. "Me vero primum," etc., thus rendered by Dryden:

> "Ye sacred Muses! with whose beauty fired
> My soul is ravished and my brain inspired,
> Whose priest I am, whose holy fillets wear,
> Would you your poet's first petition hear,
> Give me the ways of wandering stars to know,
> The depth of heaven above and earth below.
> Teach me the various labours of the moon,
> And whence proceed the eclipses of the sun;
> Why flowing tides prevail upon the main,
> And in what dark recess they shrink again;
> What shakes the solid earth; what cause delays
> The summer nights, and shortens winter days."

In keeping with these lines—as though the poet's prayer had been granted him—are the numerous allusions to the rising and setting of the signs, and to their place in the heavens which we meet with in Virgil. The most noticeable of these are in the "Georgics," especially the invocation to Cæsar in Georgic i., where the poet in a strain of exaggerated flattery discusses the future apotheosis of his patron, and invites him to add a new constellation to the Zodiac—

> "Or wilt thou bless our summers with thy rays,
> And seated near the balance poise the days;
> Where in the void of heaven a space is free
> Betwixt the Scorpion and the Maid, for thee?
> The Scorpion ready to receive thy laws,
> Yields half his region and contracts his claws."

Further on, in the same Georgic, the husbandman is exhorted to watch no less carefully than the sailor the stars in their courses, and to regulate his sowing according as this or that is in the ascendant. Barley he is to cast in when the sun is in the Balance, flax and poppies as well: millet, beans, and lucern "in spring time, when the sun with Taurus rides"—thus poetically represented,—

> "When, with his golden horns in full career,
> The Bull beats down the barriers of the year,
> And Argo and the Dog forsake the northern sphere."

Wheat must not be sown till the Pleiades and the Crown are set; vetches and lentils may be planted

from the setting of Arcturus till mid-winter. Turning to Georgic iii. we have the Scythians described as a race of savages who live under Charles's Wain ("Georgics," iii. 382), and the shepherd is to shelter his sheep in south-looking places against the season of winter, "when chill Aquarius sprinkles with showers the closing year" ("Georgics," iii. 304), while in "Georgics," iv. 231, we have this truly poetical picture of the two seasons for gathering the store of honey: the one in May, the other in the end of October corresponding with the rising and the setting of the Pleiades:

"Two honey harvests fall in every year:
First, when the pleasing Pleiades appear,
And springing upwards spurn the briny seas.
Again, when their affrighted choir surveys
The wat'ry Scorpion mend his pace behind
With a black train of storms and winter wind,
They plunge into the deep and safe protection find."

Compare with these the following verses descriptive of celestial phenomena out of Mr. Tennyson's works. The first three extracts are from the "Princess":

"This world was once a fluid haze of light,
Till toward the centre set the starry tides,
And eddied into suns, that wheeling cast
The planets."

"Like those three stars of the airy Giant's zone,
That glitter burnished by the frosty dark;
And as the fiery Sirius alters hue,
And bickers into red and emerald, shone
Their morions, wash'd with morning, as they came."

"Then, ere the silver sickle of that month
Became her golden shield."

Two other aspects of our satellite are given in these graceful lines from "The Voyage":

"Far ran the naked moon across
The houseless ocean's heaving field;
Or flying shone, the silver boss
Of her own halo's dusky shield."

What follows is from "The Last Tournament," descriptive of the Aurora Borealis:

"They fired the tower,
Which half that autumn night like the live north
Red-pulsing up through Alioth and Alcor
Made all above it and a hundred meres
About it, as the water Moab saw
Come round by the East, and out beyond them flush'd
The long low dune, and lazy-plunging sea."

Our next extract shall be from "Maud," where the season is indicated by the position of the signs as seen on a clear night above the downs:

"For it fell at a time of year
When the face of night is fair on the dewy downs,
And the shining daffodil dies, and the Charioteer
And starry Gemini hang like glorious crowns
Over Orion's grave low down in the west."

This figure of the grave is reproduced in "In Memoriam," No. lxxxviii., where Venus is pictured as about to follow in the wake of Jupiter:

"And last, returning from afar,
Before the crimson-circled star
Had fall'n into her father's grave."

In the same group of poems, and evidently composed very late in the collection, the poet finds in the changed name and changed position of one and the self-same star an analogy to his own condition :

> "Sweet Hesper-Phosphor, double name
> For what is one, the first, the last,
> Thou, like my present and my past,
> Thy place is changed : thou art the same."

These quotations are evidences of Mr. Tennyson's love of astronomy. They shew him to be, as Virgil was, a student of the stars ; and that like Virgil he can clothe with a vesture of true poetry what he has seen and noticed of their motions and changes in the heavens.

Another point of resemblance between the two poets will be found in their constant reference to and description of the sea. Both must have had good opportunities for watching it in all its moods. Both must have lived, we think, much of their life within hearing of its waves ; and both—*pace* a late writer in the *Cornhill*—have excelled in delineation of it. Here is a passage from Georgic iii. 237, brought in as a simile to illustrate the rush and roar of a bull prepared for fight with his rival, "Fluctus uti," etc. The rendering of it by Dryden is very insufficient, and we prefer to give the accurate prose translation of Conington :

"Like a billow which begins to whiten, far away in the mid sea, and draws up from the main its bellying curve; like it too, when rolling to the shore, it roars teriffic among the rocks and bursts, in bulk as huge as their parent cliff, while the water below boils up in foaming eddies, and discharges from its depths the murky sand."

Again, the rising of the sea under the winds which Æolus has let loose is finely described in "Æneid," i. 83:

> "The winds rush forth,
> Then settling on the sea the surges sweep,
> Raise liquid mountains, and disclose the deep;
> South, east, and west, with mixed confusion roar,
> And roll the foaming billows to the shore."

In contrast with this, we have in the same book the well-known description of a land-locked bay. "Est in secessu," etc:

> "Within a long recess there lies a bay,
> An island shades it from the rolling sea,
> And forms a port secure for ships to ride:
> . . . . . .
> No halsers need to bind the vessels here
> Nor bearded anchors: for no storms they fear."

As one further example of Virgil's sea descriptions let us take a passage from "Æneid," xi. 623, where the cavalry engagement between the Trojans and the Etruscans, first the one and then the other being the pursuers, is likened to the alternate advance and retreat of the waves. "Qualis ubi alterno,"

etc. Dryden takes eight lines to Virgil's five in his translation of it:

"So swelling surges with a thundering roar,
Driven on each other's back insult the shore,
Bound on the rocks, encroach upon the land,
And far upon the beach eject the sand.
Then backward with a swing they take their way,
Repulsed from upper ground, and seek their mother sea.
With equal hurry quit the invaded shore,
And swallow back the sand and stones they spew'd before."

This by no means exhausts the references in Virgil to the sea. Many more passages will occur to the reader which shew that he had watched it, and could describe it well, in storm and calm alike. But let us turn to Mr. Tennyson, and see if he has not equalled, or even surpassed the Roman poet, in the truth and beauty of his delineation of this element.

Here is the sea as Mr. Tennyson saw it when a boy on the flat, stormy coast of Lincolnshire:

"Locksley Hall, that in the distance overlooks the sandy tracts,
And the hollow ocean-ridges roaring into cataracts."

Here again is the same sea, introduced by way of simile in "The Last Tournament":

"As the crest of some slow arching wave,
Heard in dead night along that table shore
Drops flat; and after, the great waters break
Whitening for half a league, and thin themselves,
Far over sands marbled with moon and cloud,
From less and less to nothing."

In "Maud" we find quite another beach and sea,—

"The silent sapphire-spangled marriage ring of the land,"

and—

"Listening now to the tide in its broad-flung shipwrecking roar,
Now to the scream of a madden'd beach dragg'd down by the wave."

Visitors at Freshwater and the Needles will verify the truth of this, as also of what follows from "Sea Dreams," the scene of which is laid by the author upon a coast all sand and cliff and deep in-running cave:

"But while the two were sleeping, a full tide
Rose with ground-swell, which, on the foremost rocks,
Touching, upjetted in spirts of wild sea smoke,
And scaled in sheets of wasteful foam, and fell
In vast sea-cataracts."

Surely as a sea-picture this is perfect, and must be the envy of workers in the sister-art. Here are two other vigorous lines, and the last that we shall quote on this head. This from "Boadicæa," where the gathered Britons round their queen

"Roared, as when the rolling breakers boom and blanch on the precipices";

and this from "Enoch Arden":

"The league-long roller thundering on the reef."

The above examples, we submit, show a simi-

larity between Virgil and Tennyson in their treatment of the sea, in their careful drawing of its waves, and nice and true observation of its various moods.

Another point of resemblance we find in the battle pieces of the two poets, and in the love they both have of the pomp and circumstance of war. That Virgil has imitated Homer in this, and that Mr. Tennyson has profited by his imitation may be admitted. But there is something more than only imitation in their manner of dealing with martial subjects. They write of them *con amore*, as men who had "drunk delight of battle," for whom war had a fascination, who by the force of poetic genius realize to themselves and convey to their readers all the incidents of a combat, the blare of bugle, the flash of armour, "the thunder of the captains and the shouting."

Out of a superabundance of instances let us take but the two following from Virgil. The first, the vigorous description of the encounter between Mezentius and Ænæas, with which the "Æneid," x., concludes. Dryden is here very diffuse, and we prefer the rendering of Mr. Conington:

> "He ceased, and at the word he wings
> A javelin at the foe;
> Then circling round in rapid rings
> Another and another flings.
> The good shield bides each blow.

Thrice, fiercely hurling spears on spears,
From right to left he wheeled;
Thrice, facing round as he careers,
The steely grove the Trojan bears
Thick planted in his shield.

"At length impatient of delay,
Wearied with plucking spears away,
Indignant at the unequal fray
His wary fence he leaves,
And issuing with resistless force,
The temples of the gallant horse
With darted javelin cleaves.
The good steed rears, and widely sprawls,
Distracted with the wound;
Then heavily on the rider falls,
And pins him to the ground."

and this from "Æneid," ix. 748, where Pandarus is slain by Turnus. The version is Dryden's:

"Then rising on his utmost stretch he stood
And aim'd from high: the full descending blow
Cleaves the broad front and beardless cheeks in two.
Down sinks the giant with a thund'ring sound,
His ponderous limbs oppress the trembling ground,
Scalp, face, and shoulders the keen steel divides,
And the shar'd visage hangs on equal sides."

Now compare with these the following passages from Mr. Tennyson, which show him, we think, worthy to be classed with Virgil as a describer of feats of arms. We quote from the "Princess," edition 1847:

"The lists were ready. Empanoplied and plum'd
We enter'd in, and waited, fifty there
To fifty, till the terrible trumpet blared

At the barrier—yet a moment, and once more
The trumpet, and again: at which the storm
Of galloping hoofs bare on the ridge of spears,
And riders front to front, until they closed
In the middle with the crash of shivering points,
And thunder. On his haunches rose the steed,
And into fiery splinters leapt the lance,
And out of stricken helmets sprang the fire.
Part sat like rocks: part reel'd but kept their seats:
Part roll'd on the earth and rose again and drew:
Part stumbled mixt with floundering horses. Down
From those two bulks at Arac's side, and down
From Arac's arm, as from a giant's flail,
The large blows rained. . . .

And Cyril seeing it, push'd against the Prince,
With Psyche's colour round his helmet, tough,
Strong, supple, sinew-corded, apt at arms;
But tougher, suppler, stronger he that smote
And threw him: last I spurr'd: I felt my veins
Stretch with fierce heat; a moment hand to hand,
And sword to sword, and horse to horse we hung,
Till I struck out and shouted; the blade glanced;
I did but shear a feather, and life and love
Flow'd from me: darkness closed me, and I fell."[1]

[1] In the later editions these lines appear as follows:

"The lists were ready. Empanoplied and plumed
We enter'd in, and waited, fifty there
Opposed to fifty, till the trumpet blared
At the barrier like a wild horn in a land
Of echoes, and a moment, and once more
The trumpet, and again: at which the storm
Of galloping hoofs bare on the ridge of spears
And riders front to front, until they closed
In conflict with the crash of shivering points,
And thunder. Yet it seem'd a dream, I dreamed
Of fighting. On his haunches rose the steed,

Many passages equally vigorous, descriptive of combat, might be found in the "Idylls of the King." We shall be content to adduce but two—this from "Elaine"—which will serve also to exhibit Mr. Tennyson's marvellous power as a sea painter:

"They couch'd their spears and prick'd their steeds and thus,
Their plumes driv'n backward by the wind they made
In moving, all together down upon him
Bare, as a wild wave in the wide North-Sea,
Green-glimmering toward the summit, bears, with all
Its stormy crests that smoke against the skies,
Down on a bark, and overbears the bark,
And him that helms it, so they overbore
Sir Lancelot and his charger, and a spear
Down glancing lamed the charger, and a spear
Prick'd sharply his own cuirass, and the head
Pierced thro' his side, and there snapt, and remained";

And into fiery splinters leapt the lance,
And out of stricken helmets sprang the fire.
Part sat like rocks: part reel'd but kept their seats:
Part roll'd on the earth and rose again and drew:
Part stumbled mixt with floundering horses. Down
From those two bulks at Arac's side, and down
From Arac's arm, as from a giant's flail,
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And Cyril seeing it, push'd against the Prince,
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But tougher, heavier, stronger, he that smote
And threw him: last I spurr'd; I felt my veins
Stretch with fierce heat; a moment hand to hand,
And sword to sword, and horse to horse we hung,
Till I struck out and shouted; the blade glanced,
I did but shear a feather, and dream and truth
Flow'd from me; darkness closed me; and I fell."

and these two lines from "Gareth and Lynette," in which Mr. Tennyson has exactly reproduced, perhaps unconsciously, the fate of Pandarus:

> "But with one stroke Sir Gareth split the skull,
> Half fell to right and half to left and lay."

Turning from "wars and fightings," sallies and retires, and all the dire incidents of battle, in the description of which both poets have excelled, and looking to quite an opposite quarter for a further point of comparison and resemblance, we find in it the tenderness which marks alike the works of Virgil and Mr. Tennyson. The episode of Orpheus and Eurydice ("Georgics," iv. 453); the fate of Priam ("Æneid," ii. 506); the description of Dido love-wounded ("Æneid," iv. 69); the lament for young Marcellus ("Æneid," vi. 860). The story of Nisus and Euryalus, with that most touching outburst of the mother's anguish, when she hears the untimely end of her son ("Æneid," ix. 481):

> "Hunc ego te, Euryale, aspicio? tune illa senectæ
> Sera mea requies potuisti linquere solam,
> Crudelis?"—

"Is it thus I behold you, my Euryalus! could you, the last solace of my old age, could you leave me thus desolate, O cruel one!"

the death of Pallas, Silvia's wounded stag seeking refuge in its stall, and like one that begs for pity, filling the house with its cries ("Æneid," vii. 502),—these are passages which at once occur to exemplify

this feeling in Virgil. The tenderness of Mr. Tennyson is conspicuous in all parts of his poems, and it will be enough to mention "The May Queen," "The Lord of Burleigh," "The Grandmother," "Elaine," and "Guinevere," the dedicatory verses "These to His Memory," prefixed to the "Idylls," and "In Memoriam," throughout, as eminently illustrative of this quality.

And as in tenderness, so are these poets alike, and may be compared for a certain melancholy, leading them to take a depressing view of human life, of its shortness and its vanity, and all the ills to which flesh is heir. Thus Virgil in "Georgics," iii. 66:

> "Optima quæque dies miseris mortalibus ævi
> Prima fugit, subeunt morbi tristisque senectus,
> Et labor et duræ rapit inclementia mortis."

> "In youth alone unhappy mortals live.
> But oh! the mighty bliss is fugitive.
> Discoloured sickness, anxious labours come,
> And age, and death's inexorable doom";

and again in the apostrophe of Mezentius to his war horse ("Æneid," x. 861):

> "Rhœbe diu, res si qua diu mortalibus ulla est,
> Viximus."

> "O Rhœbus! we have lived too long for me,
> If life and long were terms that could agree."

Compare with these sentiments the following from Mr. Tennyson's "Maud":

> "We are puppets, Man in his pride, and Beauty fair in her flower.
> However we brave it out, we men are a little breed";

and this from his "Lucretius":

> "Tired of so much within our little life,
> Or of so little in our little life—
> Poor little life that toddles half an hour,
> Crown'd with a flower or two, and there an end";

and again from the same poem:

> "Rather plunge at once,
> Being troubled, wholly out of sight, and sink
> Past earthquake—ay, and gout and stone, that break
> Body toward death, and palsy, death-in-life."

The resemblance here is more than accidental; it arises from essential congruity of sentiment in the two minds.

There is yet one other point of comparison we would draw, and that is between the philosophy of these two poets. Allowing for the difference which the age, education, and outward surroundings must be supposed to make in the matter, both Virgil and Mr. Tennyson have very similar sentiments about the *summum bonum* of their kind. They both are quietists—wooers of the passionless bride, divine tranquillity: placing happiness in a rural life, undisturbed by ambition, unfretted by care of human praise or human blame; masters of themselves, and not sworn to the words of any particular teacher. Here is Virgil's ideal from the "Georgics," ii. 490:

> "Happy the man who studying nature's laws,
> Through known effects can trace the secret cause.

His mind possessing in a quiet state,
Fearless of fortune, and resigned to fate.
And happy too is he who decks the bowers
Of Silvans, and adores the rural powers;
Whose mind unmoved the bribes of courts can see,
Their glittering baits, and purple slavery,
Nor hopes the people's praise, nor fears their frown."

And here is the counterpart from Mr. Tennyson in "Maud":

"For not to desire or admire, if a man could learn it, were more
Than to walk all day like the sultan of old in a garden of spice";

and from the same poem:

"like a Stoic, or like
A wiser Epicurean. . . . .
Be mine a philosopher's life in the quiet woodland ways,
Where if I cannot be gay, let a passionless peace be my lot";

and in "A Dedication," in very solemn tones he begs the "dear, near" object of the poem:

"Pray that he
Who wrote it, honouring your sweet faith in him,
As one who feels the immeasurable world,
Attain the wise indifference of the wise."

But it is time to gather up our threads and draw to an end. We have sought to show that Virgil and Mr. Tennyson have much in common: that they are alike in their study of physical phenomena; in their love of astronomy; in their painting of the sea; in their description of combats; in their love of martial spectacles; in their tender-

ness and melancholy; in the view they take of human life; in their philosophy; in placing man's best happiness in tranquillity.

The comparison might be pushed much further; and in more competent hands made more complete. Nothing has been said of skill in composition; of artistic beauty of phrase; of finished excellence of workmanship; of refinement of polish; nothing of marvellous melody of rhythm; of the use of onomatopœia; of the supreme fitness of epithets; of the splendour of words and elevation of style; nothing of the numerous *feliciter dicta* and dramatic touches —points in which each of these great poets has shown himself a master: each has been without a rival in his own generation. But apart from these inviting topics of comparison, enough, we think, has been adduced to prove the thesis with which we started—to carry us out in maintaining that there is a resemblance, and that neither slight nor superficial, between the two; a resemblance closer than that between Macedon and Monmouth, founded on common points of disposition and genius, and traceable all throughout their several writings.

Both, we may add, are learned poets, on a level with the knowledge of their time; and yet both are out-door poets, fond of gardens and of flowers, with a keen eye for all that walks or creeps, or perches, or flies. Both are kind to the dumb

creation, and careful watchers of their habits. Both are alike in temperament, shy and reserved, shunning crowds and popular notice. Both have caught the ear of kings, and earned their lasting gratitude and favour. Even in outward appearance, if we may trust tradition, the two are alike: tall, dark-complexioned, wide-shouldered, bearing in their very form the mark of strong men. Both would seem to have enjoyed easy circumstances, and to have been kept from those petty cares which drive away the Muse—

> "Nam si Virgilio puer et tolerabile deesset
> Hospitium, caderent omnes a crinibus hydri:
> Surda nihil gemeret grave buccina."
>
> Juvenal, vii. 69.

"For if Virgil had to go without a servant and a decent lodging, all the snakes would fall from his hair, and the dulled trumpet would lose its martial ring."

And though while Mr. Tennyson is still[1] happily with us it would be impertinent to press too close the comparison as to manners, fortune, reputation, and the like, future commentators may perhaps think that they see in the following lines from Mr. Conington's *Life of Virgil* a description applicable *mutatis nominibus* to either poet: "In his fortunes and his friends Virgil was a happy man. Munificent patronage gave him ample means of enjoyment and leisure; and he had the friendship of all the most accomplished men of the day. He was an

[1] This was written in 1874.

amiable, good-tempered man, free from the mean passions of envy and jealousy. His fame was established in his lifetime, and cherished after his death, as an inheritance in which every Roman had a share. And his works became schoolbooks even before the death of Augustus, and continued such for centuries after. The learned poems of Virgil soon gave employment to commentators and critics. Aulus Gellius has numerous remarks on Virgil; and Macrobius has filled four books with his critical remarks on Virgil's poems."

How much of this is already true of our own poet! and how prophetic is the rest of what awaits him in years to come! There is little doubt but that Mr. Tennyson's works will hold a conspicuous place in classical education hereafter, and will be seen, like the Virgil of our youth, in schoolboy hands, well-thumbed and roughly-bound, as is the fate of such literature. Already have his chief poems exercised the skill of our best Greek and Latin translators; already are there growing up, or looming close at hand, volumes of notes to add to the difficulty of the context; and the mind shudders at the strokes which the Orbilius of the future will inflict on the pupil who shall come up without having learned his lines of Tennyson, or who shall be unable, when put on, to construe cantos xlv. or cx. (1st ed.) of "In Memoriam."

CHAPTER X.

CHARLES TENNYSON TURNER: A MEMORY OF GRASBY.

It was with a kind of heart-thrill not to be forgotten that, one morning, at school, I opened a letter from my father in which was enclosed a message from that "true poet, surely to be found, when truth is found again," Charles Tennyson Turner, an elder brother of the Laureate. My father had sent him one of my school-day sonnets, and the old poet had been kind enough not only to read it, but to criticise it. So it came to pass that correspondence sprang up between us, which ended in my looking upon him as my mentor in the music of the sonnet, and as my most unwearying of counsellors in matters pertaining to the "Terza Rima."

I have just been reading some of those quaint faded letters, scribbled upon any kind of piece of paper that was handy; often on a bit of sermon paper, always exact as to date of month and year, always full of tender dealing with a boy's verses,

and scholarly criticism both of thought and rhyme, and I have been wondering at the kindness and graciousness of them. It was not till after correspondence for ten years that we met. He was a great invalid, and, when I was at home in Lincolnshire for vacation, it often chanced he was away at Bournemouth, or Bath, or Barmouth.

But one bitter day in early January of 1876, I found myself at Grasby Vicarage, gone thither to see the poet in his pastoral home, and to talk of that which was of poetry dearest to his heart, the structure of the sonnet. I shall never forget the first impression made upon my mind, as I jogged up with a kind of farm-boy and cowboy and gardener's boy in one, through the freezing snow-bound flats of dreariest Lincolnshire, and came to the poet's home. Anything more unlike a poet's serving-man could not have been imagined, but, as the crows rose up from a potato-mound, where they were pilfering, he suddenly said, "Our Maister weant nivver let them burds be shotten, they may goa wi all the taätes for ivver, from ony bit of glebe they've a mind to. I dursn't take a gun to them, it ud be more nor my plaäce was worth. Now be dalled to it, them thieving divils they'll faäirly remble the whoäl heäp thruff. He's strangen gone upon burds and things, is the owd Maister." I said nothing, but I seemed to realize that the

spirit of the man who wrote that beautiful sonnet, "On Shooting a Swallow in Early Youth," must have made its impression on the Lincolnshire village, and that, in very unlikely ground, Charles Turner's care for all gentle life was already beginning to take root and bear fruit upward. I do not suppose the parson's man had ever heard, as I heard that same day, a lately-written sonnet, "To a starved hare in the garden in winter" ("Collected Sonnets," ccxciv.), or he would have felt how deeply in his master's heart lay the charter to feed boldly, for all creatures God had made, in that Grasby parish. Those rooks "rembling the parson's taätes" were as free to enjoy their banquet this bitter winter-tide, as the

> "Soft-footed stroller from the herbless wood,
> Stealing so mutely through my garden ground"

in eager quest of food, was welcome to the Vicarage cabbages.

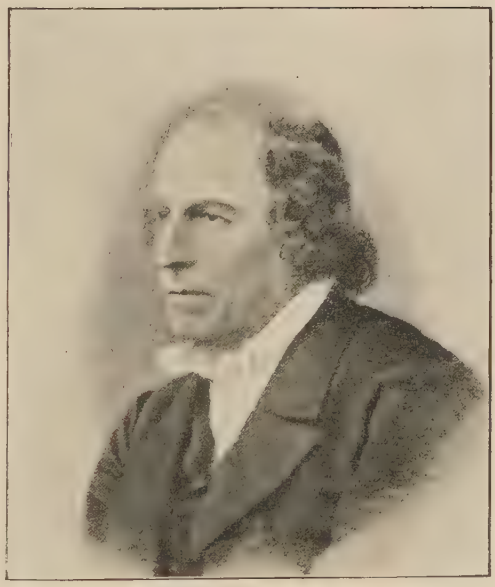
Arrived at Grasby, one was struck by the homeliness, the extreme plainness of all the surroundings. The tiles in the front Hall had long since lost their mortar, and clattered and moved as one passed toward the poet's dining-room. Upstairs and downstairs the same simplicity pervaded the house. There was not a stick of unnecessary furniture in the place. But who can describe that richest of all furnishing that filled the house—the genial welcoming,—the tender questions of the welfare of those

at home,—the knowing of all one's belongings by name, the little reminiscences of the early days of one's father and mother? Or who can forget, whoever experienced it, the solicitude with which, with their own aged hands, those dwellers in the Grasby Vicarage seemed determined to wait upon their young guest, almost shamed to be thus entreated by his elders?

I have few memories of the rooms or walls, but the portrait of the "mother of the nightingales" in the dining-room remains with me. A gentle, tender fair-complexioned woman, with, if I remember rightly, a wild rose in her bosom—as unlike any of her sons as could well be imagined. "Ah," said Charles Turner, "all there is of good and kind in any of us came from her tender heart," and the gift must needs have been great, for any who really knew the poet Charles spoke of him as the kindliest—and most appreciative of kindliness—amongst men, and those few who have read his verses to his mother will remember how he wrote:

> "Then knowledge was a thing untaught,
> Heaven's charity, a daily dole,
> Stole in inaudibly and wrought
> Its gentle bonds about the soul."

It was through the gentle, tender-hearted mother that the bonds of that same sweet charity were twined about the life of her poet children. He



CHARLES TENNYSON TURNER.

continued, "We should none of us probably have written poetry if it had not been for her. When my father almost mocked at our attempts, she gave us her warm encouragement. She would let us go with her, she in her donkey chair, or dog-chair—for a Newfoundland mastiff was her steed—and as she went through the Somersby lanes, she would listen to our bits of verse, and read to us from Beattie's 'Calendar,' or Thomson's 'Seasons,' the passages she loved the best."

I asked whether the mother did more than encourage her boys, whether she herself was ever a writer of verse, and he said he thought not, but he could not tell where the poetry came from to her children. Some years later I asked the elder brother, Frederick, the same question, and his answer was so characteristic and quaint that I transcribe it. The letter is dated St. Ewald's Jersey, Nov. 12th, '92, and it is written in an astonishingly clear and bold hand, for a man who tells me, later in the letter, that he is now in his 86th year:

"With respect to your query as to what fountain of inspiration the Tennysons are indebted, the Creator Himself only could give a perfectly definite answer. From many generations of ancestors posterity derives collective influences, and therefore it is difficult to assign to any single individual what may have been mingled in an accumulated form in the last inheritor. My mother, tender-hearted and loveable as she was, was not imaginative, though she was fond of reading Beattie's 'Minstrel.' But my grandmother Tennyson was a lively and exciteable

woman. Her maiden name was Turner, and from her I believe my father inherited a variety of talents—music, painting, and poetry, and from him, I should say, is most distinctly derived the worship of the Muses."

Dinner was soon served, and, after early dinner, we adjourned to the little study, and there, as Charles Tennyson sat and read to me in his deep and beautiful voice, first this and then that sonnet, one was able to take his kind face in, and feel that he was every inch a Tennyson. The same grand brow, the same broad chest, the same fine mouth, and the same deeply-lined furrows either side of it, the same finely-chiselled nose. The eyes of the man dark and piercing, the complexion, the brown Spanish-looking colouring that were common to most of the family. There was about him that picturesqueness quite unforgettable, that native dignity which must have made one pick this man out of a crowd, as being princely-born. His loose coat, his white shirt collar and white cuffs turned back over his coat, gave a sort of old English look to the man, who reminded me of a well-known portrait of John Milton, as he sat and boomed out sonorously his favourite sonnets.

"I always like," he said, "to write my sonnet in the morning, but I never judge of it till after dinner. If it runs and sounds well after dinner, I pass it"—and, saying this, he read me the latest he had been busy upon, "Rose and Cushie,"

cccxxxii., and "Calvus to a Fly," cccxxxix. As the old poet read the concluding four lines of the first of these, his voice faltered, and he almost broke down. It was a revelation of the real man's infinite pity for all pain. He was a veritable Saint Francis in his sense of the community of sentient things. He was describing the restless sorrow of a poor "Cushie" whose calf had been taken from her:

> "One single yearning sound repeated still,
> Moan'd from the croft, and wandered round the hill;
> The heedless train ran brawling down the line;
> On went the horseman, and the market cart;
> But little Rose, who loved the sheep and kine,
> Ran home to tell of Cushie's broken heart."

It was not, however, till the following day, that I seemed to sound the deeps of his gentle heart. Then, as he read me that tender sonnet entitled, "On Shooting a Swallow in Early Youth," cccxxix.—

> "I hoard a little spring of secret tears,
> For thee, poor bird; thy death-blow was my crime;
> From the far past it has flow'd on for years;
> It never dries; it brims at swallow-time.
> No kindly voice within me took thy part,
> Till I stood o'er thy last faint-flutterings;
> Since then, methinks, I have a gentler heart,
> And gaze with pity on all wounded wings.
> Full oft the vision of thy fallen head,
> Twittering in highway dust, appeals to me;
> Thy helpless form, as when I struck thee dead,
> Drops out from every swallow-flight I see.
> I would not have thine airy spirit laid,
> I seem to love the little ghost I made"—

I saw not secret, but very real tears on the poet's face, and when he had finished reading it or chanting it, he was unable to say anything for a few minutes, such sorrow had possessed his soul.

He recited again "Calvus to a Fly." And all his old brightness came back, he was evidently immensely tickled, not so much by the real or imaginary fly upon his own bald pate, as by the thought of the foolishness of the creature in mistaking his shiny head in the dawn for some new world of light. "Thy foolish passion for my hairless head": "I like that line," he said, with a smile. "What a fool of a fly to go and take my poor old bald pate for the rising sun! Well, well," he added, "I daresay we who are groping here in the darkness, do things almost as foolish in our search for light."

At times I noticed a great look of pain come over his fine face, as if he were suddenly racked by torment, and he would stop and say, "I have toothache all over the body." Then turning to his sonnets, he forgot all.

He spoke of the old hateful days at the Louth Grammar School. I knew from a portrait, or rather from a print of the Headmaster, Dr. Wilde, that the presiding genius of the Louth Grammar School must surely have been a man of iron will, a pedagogue of his time, and Charles Turner's

recollections of his schooldays seemed to coincide with those expressed to his son by Lord Tennyson in March of 1890. "He hated Louth School so much that he would not go down the lane where it was, when, in later life, he was at Louth."

I daresay the fact that neither of the Tennysons joined in with the games, and were generally seen out of school with books in their hands, as my uncle, one of their fellow-scholars, has told me was their wont, made the lives of the Tennyson lads less easy than it would have been. The English schoolboy is still intolerant of any original genius or unconventionality of life in his fellow-scholars.

He spoke of the publication of that first volume, the *Poems by two Brothers*. "I remember," he said, "as if it were but yesterday, how triumphant we were, when that volume appeared. We took a carriage and drove to the sea-coast at Mablethorpe, and shouted ourselves hoarse on the shore, first one and then the other of us, reciting the poems with no other audience than deaf sand and sounding sea wave. And how we drove across the marsh in the late evening, as happy as if we were beings possessed. But I do not think that the pleasure of seeing ourselves in print was equal to the pride with which we used to show the poems in proof to our mother,

when the carrier brought them over to the Tetford Hill. She was the best critic we ever had."

I may interpolate here, that the Laureate, years after, spoke of that day at Mablethorpe as apocryphal. But I cannot doubt that all happened as related to me, there in the Grasby study, by Charles Tennyson Turner.

That evening was given up to sonnet-talk. I asked why it was that he had so stuck to the sonnet metre ; he could only say that Alfred's fame, and name, and great mastery of verse had so overshadowed him, that he had felt fearful of attempting any lyric or epic writing, and he had been content, perforce, with the "sonnet's scanty plot of ground." I asked him why he had been silent so long—for his first volume of sonnets had appeared in 1830, and his second volume did not see the light till 1864. He told me that he could not account for his dumbness. He supposed the wells had been frozen at his heart—but, he added, "I think it was Alfred's perfect work that made me feel so ashamed of my own poor attempts that I did not brace myself to the task."

To this I replied, that from my father I knew what high value his brother, the Laureate, put upon his—Charles'—sonnets. And it is to me still a delightful thing to remember, what life and interest and real joy seemed to come into his old

face, as I recounted how Alfred Tennyson had, in my father's hearing, taken up the volume of sonnets published in 1868, and reading, in his sonorous way, the two sonnets on the "Steam Threshing Machine," ccvii., ccviii., had said, "It is no use my trying to write sonnets, when Charles can turn out such music as that, upon an unmusical subject. And had added "Look at the close observation and dignity of it. There is no one in the world that could have written that sonnet but Charles," and how he had thereon again read out that sonnet that begins

"Flush with the pond the lurid furnace burn'd."

The profound admiration for his younger brother, the Laureate, that had perhaps helped to dwarf the elder brother's song, was seen in all Charles Turner said that evening of him, and when, a few years after, I read those lines, entitled "Midnight, June 30th, 1829," written by the Laureate as a preparatory poem to his brother's sonnets, I could understand how it came to pass that the younger poet could speak of him as

"True brother, only to be known
By those who love thee best."

And could say of him,

"True poet, surely to be found
When truth is found again."

Next morning we were summoned early to go through the cold to the colder little parish Church,

to hear a curate read in a cold voice the morning prayers to our three selves. I can see the quaint little company pattering through the snow. Mrs. Tennyson in grey-frieze cloak, with what seemed to be a pair of clogs on her feet. And the old poet with a huge frieze coaching-day cape whose collar was turned up to keep his ears from harm. I remember, too, his tender and courtly solicitude for my own want of a great-coat, and how he insisted that a shawl or rug should be wrapped about my shoulders for the morning "office." Then we came back to breakfast. It is true the tea was made, the bacon was fried and was likely to catch cold somewhat. But nothing was to hinder the due performance of family prayers; for the servants had not been to the village church. Prayers were duly, if somewhat slowly and largely, said, and, when we rose from our knees, the bacon looked like a marble "brecchia." I mention this tiny little incident to show how entirely, in a world where bacon and the comforts of the cosy breakfast were not, the presiding spirits of that tender-hearted, high-souled household, lived and moved and had their being. And I shall not soon forget the deeply reverential air with which the poet read the portion of Scripture and recited the prayers. With what anxiety he asked of the old servant, as she floundered round the room, after the health of this or

that parishioner. For nearly thirty years had he made the woes and wants of the Grasby village his own. He had built the Vicarage, the Church, the Schools, and now crippled and full of pain he would each morning go through the cold, and the mud and the rain, to pray with the people who could come to church, and for them, if they would not or could not. I understood, after that service of morning prayer in church and in his dining-room, how really autobiographical was that sonnet, "The Pastor's Prayer," cclxxxviii.

"At dawn, he marks the smoke among the trees,
From hearths, to which his daily footsteps go;
And hopes and fears and ponders on his knees,
If his poor sheep will heed his voice or no;
What wholesome turn will Ailsie's sorrow take?
Her latest sin will careless Annie rue?
Will Robin now, at last, his wiles forsake?
Meet his old dupes, yet hold his balance true?
He prays at noon, with all the warmth of heaven
About his heart, that each may be forgiven;
He prays at eve: and through the midnight air
Sends holy ventures to the throne above;
His very dreams are faithful to his prayer,
And follow, with closed eyes, the path of love."

The rest of that day we spent in sonnet-reading and recitations.

Amongst the sonnets published in 1830 were two that were full of the breath of his Lincolnshire homeland: "The Ocean," vi., and "Love of Home," vii. In the first he was in mind of the long

breakers and the pauses between them by the sea coast at Skegness or Mablethorpe.

> "The Ocean, at the bidding of the Moon
> For ever changes with his restless tide;
> Flung shoreward now, to be regather'd soon
> With kingly pauses of reluctant pride,
> And semblance of return. Anon from home
> He issues forth again high ridged and free:
> The gentlest murmur of his seething foam,
> Like armies whispering where great echoes be."

I said, "Ah, that is the sea at old Skeggy," and he admitted that it was in his mind, as he wrote it. "I like that line," I said, "With kingly pauses of reluctant pride"; and he answered "The line most to my mind is,

> "'Like armies whispering where great echoes be.'"

In the next sonnet, "Love of Home," he had evidently been back in Holywell wood, and by the stream at Somersby. And he talked with enthusiasm of the days at the old home. "Tending thither, flowed the strong current of his memory"; he spoke of the way in which he and his brother Alfred peopled that Holywell wood with forms of fairies, and made the whole surrounding circle of the hills, a theatre for enchantment and chivalry.

The only other sonnet of that first volume he recited was the sonnet xxi., "On Startling Some Pigeons."

I said, "I believe you were often at Halton

Holgate; was the great pigeon house in the Rectory-field in your mind, when you wrote that?" He said, "It may have been so, but most of the farms had their pigeon-cotes when I was a boy."

"A hundred wings are dropt as soft as one,
Now ye are lighted! Pleasing to my sight
The fearful circle of your wondering flight,
Rapid and loud, and drawing homeward soon;
And then, the sober chiding of your tone,
As there ye sit, from your own roofs arraigning
My trespass on your haunts, so boldly done,
Sounds like a solemn and a just complaining."

He admitted that he was pleased to think of the truth to nature in all this description, but the lines he liked best in that sonnet were the last two and a half lines:

"O happy, happy race! for though there clings
A feeble fear about your timid clan,
Yet are ye blest! with not a thought that brings
Disquietude, while proud and sorrowing man,
An eagle, weary of his mighty wings,
With anxious inquest fills his little span."

He told me that he was proud to think that S. Taylor Coleridge had said of it that it was a sweet sonnet, and faultless except for the use of the word "little" in the last line, and the last word but one. And so, in the 1868 edition of the sonnet he had altered the word "little" to the word "mortal." But in the "Collected Sonnets" the old reading is retained.

Of the sonnets published in 1862, he read "The Arrow-King," lxi.; "The Buoy Bell," lxxiii.; "A Thought for March 1860," lxxxvi.; "The Great Exhibition of 1862," xc.; "The Lattice at Sunrise," cxiv.; and "Time and Twilight," cxviii. That first sonnet I knew was a favourite of his brother Arthur and he seemed pleased to hear of this. He repeated two lines in a kind of dream,

> "An arrow feather'd with two mighty vans,
> That soars and stoops at will";

but he added, "I am more satisfied with the description of the death of the canary, in 'The Vacant Cage' lxiv.

> "'His poor head buried near his bursting heart,
> Which beat within a puft and troubled frame'";

and then he recited twice the "Buoy Bell," lxxiii.:

> "How like the leper, with his own sad cry
> Enforcing its own solitude, it tolls!
> That lonely bell set in the rushing shoals,
> To warn us from the place of jeopardy."

He had heard that bell somewhere in the shoals of the Humber, and the sadness and the sorrow of its trembling mouth fulfilled with bitter spray, had haunted him ever since. He next read "A Thought for March, 1860"—

> "Ere long,
> Another March will come these hills among,
> To clash the lattices and whirl the mills."

"That's a bit of true Lincolnshire in Sonnet xc.," he said, and paused at the lines

> "The o'erladen camel's spongy foot springs home
> To its old span";

and he said, "I think that is true," but he added "I am fondest of 'The Lattice at Sunrise.' It is a bit of my real life," and he read and reread it,

> "'As on my bed at dawn I mused and pray'd,
> I saw my lattice prankt upon the wall";

when he came to the lines

> "We are not free
> "To say we see not, for the glory comes
> Nightly and daily, like the flowing sea,"

he sobbed audibly; as if he went back in mind to some great agony in his life, some doubt perhaps he had met and conquered, some darkness from which he had been mercifully delivered. Then he continued:

> "'His lustre pierceth through the midnight glooms
> And at prime hour, behold! He follows me
> With golden shadows to my secret rooms,'

Ah yes," he said, "thank God for that." When he had finished reading "Time and Twilight," I said, "I suppose the little country town is Spilsby," and he answered, "Yes, we used to walk across the fields thither." He did not remember how or where he crossed the river, but he seemed to think there was a bridge between Partney and Saucethorpe.

From the sonnets published in 1868, he read, "The Holy Emerald," cl.; "Eustace and Edith," clxx.; "Annie and Ambrose," clxxvii.; "Drowned in the Tropics," clxxxiii.; and "The Sea Fairies' Answer," clxxxiv.; "A Brilliant Day," clxxxix.; "The Rookery," cxcviii. I think I can hear him still say

> "Thy shining surface must be lower'd
> Thy goodly prominence be chipt and scored,
> Till those deep scars have brought His features out,"

and

> "The nautilus shall push his purple sail
> Across her happy shadow."

But twice he recited "The Rookery," then he said, "What a wonderful people these rooks are, what a life they lend to our dark winter even-fall. It is one of the pleasures of my winter day—this homing of the rookery, they are so human. 'The dark clan talks, the social instincts move.'"

Amongst the sonnets published in 1873 he read "The Barmouth Sea Bridge," ccxl.; "The Hydraulic Ram," ccxlvi.; "To the Gossamer Light," cclxxii.; and "My Timepiece," cclxxxi. Of the first we had a talk later on the same evening, and a good deal of discussion about the sonnet, as a vehicle for a thought, ensued upon the reading of the three last lines of the sonnet "To the Gossamer Light."

"Thy buoyant thread
Is as the sonnet, poising one bright thought,
That moves but does not vanish! borne along
Like light, a golden drift through all the song!"

He told me that he was glad to think that he had written the four last lines in the "My Time-piece" sonnet—

"My clock's a mocking thief, who steals my coin,
Then, counting up the sum, as if to say
'How many precious pieces I purloin,
One, two, three, four'—trips daintily away."

"For," said he, "a clock is such a companionable living thing, especially to an invalid," and he thought the poets had not given it its due.

Of the unpublished sonnets, the ones he seemed to care for most were "On seeing a little child spin a coin of Alexander the Great," ccc.; "Letty's Glove," cccvi.; "Great Britain Through the Ice," cccxvi.; "The Lover and His Watch," cccxviii.; "On Shooting a Swallow in Early Youth," cccxxix. After reciting

"A simple child may do him shame and slight;
Twixt thumb and finger take the golden head,
And spin the *horns of Ammon* out of sight"—

he said, "I think this a beautiful fancy, and it is so to the truth. I saw it done." "Letty's Globe" he had only just finished to his satisfaction.

"When Letty had scarce pass'd her third glad year,
And her young, artless words began to flow,
One day we gave the child a colour'd sphere

Of the wide earth, that she might mark and know,
By tint and outline, all its sea and land.
She patted all the world; old empires peep'd
Between her baby fingers; her soft hand
Was welcome at all frontiers. How she leap'd,
And laugh'd, and prattled in her world-wide bliss;
But when we turned her sweet unlearned eye
On our own isle, she raised a joyous cry,
'Oh! yes, I see it, Letty's home is there!'
And, while she hid all England with a kiss,
Bright over Europe fell her golden hair."

He repeated those lines,

"Old empires peep'd
Between her baby fingers; her soft hand
Was welcome at all frontiers,"

twice, and at the conclusion of the sonnet, he again read twice over

"And while she hid all England with a kiss,
Bright over Europe fell her golden hair."

I have spoken of how deeply moved the old poet was, at the remembrance of his thoughtless shooting of a swallow in early youth. He must have been a passionate lover of birds to judge by his frequent allusions to them, and the careful observations of them, as recorded in his sonnets. I remember still the tone with which he recited the sonnet, "Great Britain Through the Ice," and how he dwelt affectionately on the line

"And lift the larks, and land the nightingales,"

and I can still hear the mellow tone with which he concluded

"And this wild alien unfamiliar Wales
Melt home among her harps? and vernal skies
Thaw out old Dover for the houseless kings?"

It was in talking over "The Lover and His Watch," cccxviii., that he showed me how much we miss, by refusing to see poetry in common things, and especially in thinking of all the mechanisms of our day as if they could have no poetry in them. We had, earlier in our talk, spoken of his sonnet "The Steam Threshing Machine," and he pointed me to the later sonnet, "The Barmouth Sea Bridge," ccxi.

"Those vast mechanics, mighty to convoy
A length of cars high over flood and ooze."

He said he had chanced to be at Barmouth at its completion and it had given him the thought he had embodied. He then quoted "The Hydraulic Ram," ccxlvi., and asked me if I did not think there was a pathos about the solitary beating of its heart,

"As this imprisoned engine night and day
Plies its dull pulses in the darkness there."

I assented, and said that I wished he would do for the railway what he had done for the steam thresher and the hydraulic ram. And he said, "Well, if you will send me a sonnet after your railway journey to-morrow, I will promise to send you one back in answer." I took him at his word and sent him one, and he replied with "The

Mute Lovers on the Railway Journey," cccviii., in which he expressed the sadness of the lover facing

> "the vacant south,
> While fields and wood ran back to Edith More."

I left Grasby very full of rich sonnet-music, and have never forgotten the sound of the sonneteer's voice.

I saw him again, and had many talks with him. In the following year he came down to Bristol for complete change and rest, to consult about the taking of baths, and to be near his old friend Dr. Kerr. His pain was great—double toothache this time, as he said to me, all over the body; but he used to work away at the revision of his sonnets in the intervals of pain, and if I remember rightly he was engaged upon the sonnet "To Beatrice, on her first interview with Dante," cccxxxviii. He certainly quoted it to me then as if it were new, and rolled out the first line grandly,

> "Daughter of Portinari, thou hast met,"

and said that he was pleased with the last two lines:

> "Hail little handmaid of a great renown,
> With thine eight summers and thy crimson gown."

And "A Country Dance," cccxli., seemed a favourite with him:

> "With jealous heed her lessening voice he hears
> Down that long vista, where she seems to move
> Among fond faces and relays of love.

> And sweet occasion, full of tender fears;
> Down those long lines he watches from above,
> Till with the refluent dance she reappears."

"I like that word 'refluent,'" he said. It was touching to find the kind old poet going back in thought to the dancing days of Horncastle and Spilsby. He too had been a dancer in his youth. It was easy to see how he forgot all his pain in his memory of the happy faces and the fun of Sir Roger de Coverley in the days of old. It was just like his sympathy with all things young and pure and full of life and beautiful, that he should, once again, rehearse in mind the country dance and feel such keen sympathy with the young lover who, though "he has not woo'd," "has lost his heart," and felt that dance a sore testing of his love.

My recollection of the impressions of this last visit are of the poet's extreme regret that his pastoral work at Grasby had now come to an end. It was a forlorn thing to find the sheep were in the wilderness and their shepherd too crippled to go and seek them. He spoke too of his pleasure that, as he looked back over his poetic work, he felt it pure and good. "The kindliest, or at any rate," he said, "the most treasured criticism on it are the words of my dear old friend Bishop Wordsworth. I sent him my sonnets, and he spoke of me as 'Inter Christianorum poetas, facile princeps'—I do

not care to be chief, it is better to be as those who serve, but I do care much that I am reckoned worthy to be classed among the poets of Christ. The Bishop's kindly words have been a great solace to me."

It was his intense love of purity and fondness of truth that made him so sincere a lover of children. He too, like Hartley Coleridge, the child's laureate, kept "a young lamb's heart among the full-grown flocks," and since Hartley's day we have had none except, perhaps, Robert Louis Stevenson, who seems so to have cared to chronicle the feelings of childhood and the impressions of beauty and delight which the child life makes upon us all.

Any one who will take Charles Tennyson Turner's *Autobiography*—his "Collected Sonnets," in hand, and reads such poems as "On seeing a child blush on his first view of a corpse," "A birthday," "On the death of two little children," "Minnie and her dove," "Eustace and Edith," "Make-believe hunting," "The schoolboy's dream on the night before the holidays," "Little Phoebe," "Drowned in the Tropics," "To a little child who asked for a laurel crown," "Little Samuel," "On a child's eyes," "Little Nora," "Our Mary and the child mummy," "Called from bed," "The sick orphan," "The little heir of shame," "On seeing

a little child spin a coin of Alexander the Great," "To a 'Tenting' boy," "Letty's globe," "The seaside truants," "It was her first sweet child, her heart's delight," "Rose and Cushie," "Millie Macgill," will understand how his heart beat warmly to the child's heart wherever he met it, and there is something infinitely touching in the thought that this childless man, as he grew in years, seemed to grow more devoted to the study of the child life he so honoured. No one could be in his presence an hour without feeling that he, the bard, had put on the childlike mind without which the wisest cannot enter the Kingdom. He certainly struck me as one of the gentlest, sincerest, and humblest-hearted men I had ever met.

In the following spring, on my wedding day, I wrote to thank him for a book he had, in his kindly thought, sent to me as a wedding present. I chanced to tell him how, as we came from the church, my wife had gone aside a moment to lay her bridal bouquet upon her father's grave in the Brathay churchyard. In less than a week there came back a touching sonnet "The Wedding Posy," cccxxxvi.

"Thanks to thy newly-wedded hand, which gave
These bridal honours to the tomb to-day,
A daughter's wedding posy! Who shall say

It is a truant at a father's grave?
O'er the blue hills, fair Edith, thou art gone;
Thou and thy native flowers are sundered wide;
But still ye are so tenderly allied
On earth, that your twin sweetness shall be one
In heaven. Our Father's eye shall ne'er reprove
The bride's recurrence to the daughter's love.
And when thou hast fulfill'd thy days and hours,
And thy pure life its meed of glory brings,
The earliest passage of thine angel wings
Among the blest shall tell of orange flowers!"

It was among the last he wrote. I am not sure but that it was the very last. His health was failing fast. A little more than a year after, he who had suffered much passed quietly away to the land where there is no pain, on April 25, 1879. His dear and saintly wife, the sister of Lady Tennyson, was not long separated from him: within a month they bore her body to rest beside his own in the Cheltenham Cemetery.

I know from private letters how deeply Charles' death affected his brother the Laureate, as indeed all the world may know who have read that memorial poem entitled "Midnight," which begins:

"Midnight, in no midsummer tune
The breakers lash the shores,
The cuckoo of a joyless June
Is calling out of doors."

Those who have ever met Lord Tennyson, will remember how vividly his boyhood, and the days of long ago at Somersby, were always present at

the call of memory, and will understand the depth of meaning and the fervent reality of the prayer:

"And thro' the midnight breaks the sun
Of sixty years away,
The light of days when life begun,
The days that seem to-day.

"When all my griefs were shared with thee,
And all my hopes were thine,
As all thou wast was one with me,
May all thou art be mine!"

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